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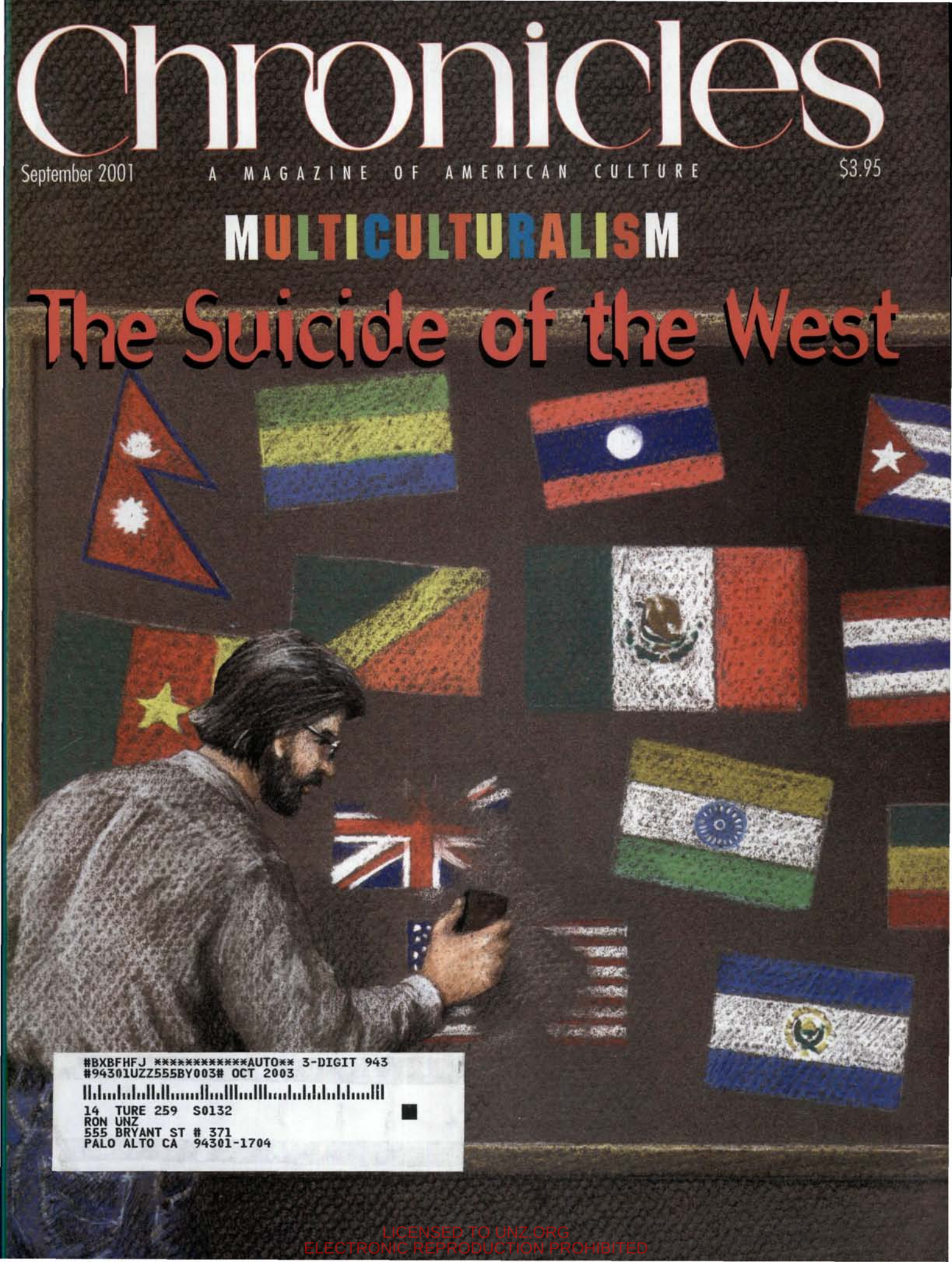

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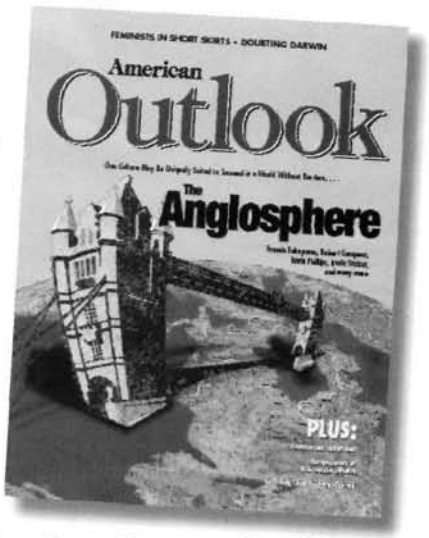

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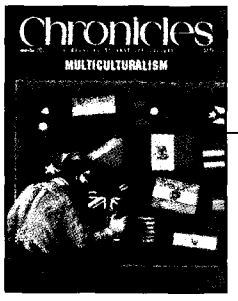

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Celebrity

I must take up computer and mouse in indignation. How could you include Elvis on your "celebrity" cover? What possessed you to put the King amongst a group of the world's great sleazeballs? And at the head of the table? Have you no shame, gentlemen?

True, the King was famous, and true, in his latter years, he was slave to a gaudy (though I would contend endearing) vulgarity which I suppose Nabokov would have called "poshlust."

But Elvis had nothing in common with the wretches who besmirch your cover. He belongs with Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Merle Haggard (whose tribute album to Elvis is unforgettable). Leather jacket or jewel-studded outfit, he nevertheless belongs to the world of real American song.

You rightly scorn a new kind (or should I say mutation) of fame, which has no existence apart from the money pot—thus the thief and harridan Hillary Clinton, the grasping and corrupt Jesse Jackson. One could go on about the rest.

But the point remains. Elvis does not belong in this picture. He was a Southern boy who made good and was *destroyed* by a world in which the rest of the people on your cover *flourish*. That alone should have given you pause. That you neglected this obvious contradiction should be cause for deep second thoughts and long faces in your office.

As Merle Haggard has said, Elvis has gone from Graceland to the Promised Land. Can you say that fate awaits anyone else on your cover?

—*Robert Alpert*
Newton, MA

Dr. Fleming Replies:

Our issue took up the artificial construction of celebrity, and if Elvis was the king of anything, it was of hype. Even before Col. Tom Parker took over his career, Elvis had shown a predilection for Tin Pan Alley over authentic rural music, and while he did have talent, the same can be said of many celebrities who have been hyped beyond their level of competence: Judy Garland, Norman Mailer, Leonard Bernstein—the list is endless.

Elvis's rendition of "Blue Suede Shoes" is wonderful pop music, but it sounds phony after you go back to Carl Perkins—who actually wrote many of the songs he performed. In the limited world of Southern pop culture, Elvis—from the time he recorded the execrable Lieber and Stoller composition "Hound Dog" to his sub-adolescent movies to his reincarnation as a postpubertal Wayne Newton—strikes a false note. Elvis stands in the same relationship to Carl Perkins and Little Richard as Pat Boone stands to Elvis. He's not the King—he's not even the Duke of Earl.

On Morality in Film

In his review of John Boorman's *The Tailor of Panama* (*In the Dark*, June), George McCartney comments in detail and at great length on what he perceives to be the film's merits. Some of these are real, though hardly worthy of the extravagant praise that McCartney bestows. He especially praises Pierce Brosnan for his portrayal of a superficially suave, callous, ruthless and generally revolting intelligence agent. Besides the lavishness and extent of its praise, what is striking about McCartney's review is that it does not so much as mention one of the movie's most prominent features: its blatant and protracted pandering to the presumed lascivious appetites and lurid imagination of the audience. So the agent is a brutal manipulator, a rake and an inveterate womanizer: Why dwell on what is so quickly obvious, why describe every instance and nuance of dissolute behavior, especially if it happens to be sexual? No artistic need is served. McCartney recognizes that Brosnan's character is repulsive, but instead of objecting to the prolonged depiction of it, he calls it "fascinating," as if anything of value might be gained from elaborate exploration of an essentially vulgar, sordid, and one-dimensional character. The filmmakers seem really to enjoy this part of their work. They adopt a cynical perspective quite in tune with that of the intelligence agent. What little survives of real love and integrity at the end of the action fi-

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nally does triumph, but by that time, the main characters have been shown to be far less than admirable and wholly susceptible to one or another form of moral corruption. This includes the tailor's wife, whom McCartney wrongly describes as "entirely immune" to the appeal of the womanizing agent. Hence, the apparent message praised by McCartney—that good exists and that bad deeds have bad consequences—comes across as phony, as an artificial add-on. The movie tries in the 11th hour to please the moralists in the audience, and some of them are apparently used to being grateful for small favors, quite happy to spend the other ten hours seeing their principles honored in the breach. McCartney's take on the movie is not without foundation, but it is strange that he should be seemingly oblivious of the film's highly questionable kind of moral ambivalence, its basic dishonesty.

—Claes G. Ryn
Potomac, MD

Dr. McCartney Replies:

Dr. Ryn takes me to task for overlooking the film's "basic dishonesty," "its blatant and protracted pandering." I assume he is referring especially to Boorman's inclusion of a show-and-tell sex scene between Brosnan's character and a British attaché. I agree: This scene is not artistically justified. We don't need to see actors get naked and roll around with one another to know their characters are dissolute or, should they be married, conjugally correct. This information can be communicated quite readily without doffing so much as a cloche. That said, the scene in question is quite restrained by today's admittedly low standards. By my estimate, it lasts less than a minute and is shot in nearly total darkness so that the actors appear as blue and white silhouettes, a palette choice that emphasizes the cold-hearted nature of their loveless coupling.

Dr. Ryn goes on to charge me with being too ready to applaud any sign of moral intelligence in the products of an otherwise cynically compromised film industry. Well, yes. Under the onslaught of a befouled popular culture, one does search for the odd gold nugget in the mud. Nevertheless I hold with my original judgement of *The Tailor of Panama*. Despite its glancing concession to current film conventions in the matter of visualizing what would be better implied, the film is an intelligent and essentially moral satire. With wit and justice, it skewers the brand of international power politics conducted by the First World in collusion with corrupt rulers of the Third who are often so willing to exploit and abuse the poor of their own lands mercilessly while we look the other way. As for Brosnan's character, his brutal use of others for his own financial aggrandizement is critical to the film's meaning. He incarnates the evil that well-intentioned people and their governments let loose in the world when they refuse to consider closely their self-serving policies. However important our access the Panama Canal, is it right that we ignore the inequities visited on the local population by those we help stay in power?

One more issue. Dr. Ryn reproaches me for finding Brosnan's character "fascinating." First, let's put this in context. Having called him fascinating, I call him a "moral cretin" in the next sentence. Second, what else can the spectacle of evil be but fascinating? In its presence, we are transfixed with fear and wonder not just with regard to the perpetrator at hand but—if we're honest—with its latent appeal to ourselves. If not, would Milton's Satan mean anything to us? Would we still bother to read Hawthorne? Would Mr. Kurtz's horror still resonate? Would Harry Lime go on dazzling us with his boundless willfulness? Evil fascinates us precisely because it is the subject of the central question in our lives: What should we do about our devilish self-will? The achievement of Boorman's film and the John le Carré novel on which it is based should not be slighted. Among other things, it unmasks the all-too-influential amoral icon of our time, the screen version of James Bond. Here, he stands revealed as the repellent thug he really is. No one will swagger from this film humming the theme to *Goldfinger*. I think that's reason enough to lavish a little praise.

On Vanquishing Heathens

While I enjoy *Chronicles* immensely, a particular issue sometimes exceeds your high standards.

Timothy Murphy's *Horses For My Father* (June) was, to my taste, the finest piece of American poetry of the last 50 years. The seventh stanza was particularly poignant because it evoked memories of my mother's father, who farmed a quarter-section in Caldwell, Idaho, for 40 years. From him, I learned a fierce love for the Old Republic, and a reverence for books and learning. He also taught me to work complex mathematical problems with a framing square—as well as the art of rifle shooting with an .03 Springfield.

It was also a great treat to read Andrei Navrozov's "The Avenging Deity as a Rational Projection of the Wounded Ego" (*Views*), which was so well written that my wife, who is not at all political, found it both cogent and profound. The merits of his "Letter From Venice: Up With Prejudice" (*Correspondence*) are so self-evident that they don't need me to echo them. This feature is a positive luxury to read and a treat best enjoyed with a good cigar and a little Armagnac.

Lastly, let me add to the sentiments of another *Chronicles* reader who said that *Chronicles* was "the college education I never had." Last month, I travelled to Massachusetts on business. While there, I was invited to dine at a good restaurant in Northhampton, the home of Smith College. After dinner, we went to a local college haunt for a nightcap and some conversation. It took all of ten minutes before the enemy was identified.

I was amazed at how easily a 40-year-old machinist with a public-high-school education, armed with a five-year running subscription to *Chronicles*, could demolish the arguments (both artistic and political) of an amalgamation of lesbians, Wiccans, and pierced and tattooed heathens with a composite million-dollars-worth of Ivy League education. On the way out the door, I had to remind their high priestess, a theater-arts major at Smith, that very little of worth had been penned for the stage in about 400 years, and that, for pure drama, Euripides *Trojan Women* was hard to beat—unless her tastes were more inclined to the Latin dramatists, in which case she would like Seneca's *Hecuba* more. For good measure, I added that Maya Angelou was no Wordsworth, and that what Toni Morrison did should be called *typing*, not *writing*.

I was saddened, though, by the expression of amazement on the faces of my companions at hearing a commoner recite Keats and Shakespeare and show an interest in anything beyond the prosaic. It was the same expression one can imagine on the faces of savages being shown the use of a phosphorous-tipped match.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to sit at the table with giants.

—Monte Martinez
Brigham City, UT

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PRESIDENT BUSH wants to do for churches and Christian charities what the Department of Education has done for public schools: Attach them so firmly to the teat of big government that it would be impossible to unlatch them without financially crippling them. The funny thing is, this does not appear to be a concern for most Catholics, evangelicals, and mainline Protestants, as long as they get their money.

Bush inaugurated his Office of Faith-Based Initiatives in January 2001, shortly after taking office. "We will help all in their work to change hearts," he said, "while keeping a commitment to pluralism." Carefully sidestepping the concerns of ACLU watchdogs who feared that this initiative amounted to a federal establishment of religion, the President's staff stipulated that the funding would only provide assistance for the charitable functions of faith-based ministries, such as drug-addiction programs. "It can fund the soup," said former Indianapolis Mayor Steve Goldsmith, and "it can fund the shelter. It shouldn't fund the Bibles, and I think if we maintain that division, we'll be in the right place." Goldsmith has been selected to head the wildly successful AmeriCorps volunteer program (part of Bill Clinton's legacy), which will now also network with faith-based charities.

President Bush appointed John DiIulio, "a devout Roman Catholic," to be his faith czar, and DiIulio immediately began meeting with the leadership of such groups as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Ministries, and the Salvation Army. After meeting with DiIulio in D.C., Fred Kammer, S.J., president of Catholic Charities USA, was upset not that government regulations might be imposed on groups receiving federal funds, but that the Bush tax cut might undue any good done by the proposed "$700 million compassionate capital fund."

The Salvation Army, on the other hand, issued a memorandum on May 1 to DiIulio—complete with language urging him to "minimize the possibility of any 'leak' to the media." The memo requested that—in exchange for annual p.r. support in the amount of $110,000 and the lobbying of "more than 100 divisional command members to Congressional offices, encouraging support for the charitable choice provisions in a prearranged agreement with the White House"—the President's team offer the Salvation Army a "firm commitment" that, by executive order or federal regulation, Washington would override state and local governments' attempts to force the church to hire homosexuals. It took two whole months for some deep throat to squeal to the *Washington Post*, but after the story ran in early July, the White House issued its usual affirm/deny response. For evangelicals and Catholics far and wide, this was a victory, and they lauded the Army for initiating this protective provision. (Never mind that it feeds yet another growth spurt in the federal leviathan.) But one bad turn apparently deserves another.

The Bush plan's legislative counterpart, the "Community Solutions Act" (H.R. 7), introduced by Rep. J.C. Watts (R-OK), passed through the Ways and Means Committee by a 23 to 16 party-line vote and went to the full House for debate in mid-July. At that time, H.R. 7 contained the same stipulations that the Salvation Army requested from DiIulio and President Bush.

Whether by Congress or through an executive order, some form of Bush's faith-based initiative will pass, and it will have several effects on its potential victims: First, it will cause churches and Christian charities who follow the yellow-brick road to marginalize the truly Christian aspects of their ministries—the administration of Word and Sacrament—and bury them in red tape. Second, it will allow these organizations—especially the ones hurting for money—to become fully dependent upon federal aid. And third, it will open the door for President Gephart, Daschle, or McCain to exploit this new dependency by eliminating anything distinctly Christian in these well-funded churches and charities (see, once again, the Department of Education). Churches will bend over backward to keep the gravy train rolling. The Salvation Army is already doing it. After their memo to DiIulio was leaked to the *Post*, they issued a press release stating that, "among our 45,000 employees in the USA, there are people of all races, religions and sexual orientation. . . . In practice, we consistently seek competent individuals who believe in our mission to serve." And serve, they will—all of them.

—*Aaron D. Wolf*

PRESIDENT BUSH, many of us believed, was preparing to appoint a set of jurists committed to the rule of law to the federal bench, but this has been thrown into doubt by Senator Jeffords leaving the Republican party. One of the immediate results of that move, which threw committee control of the Senate to the Democrats, was a set of hearings presided over by New York's senior senator, Democrat Charles Schumer, on what he called "ideology" and its role in judicial selection.

Orthodox legal thinkers believe that ideology plays no role in judicial selection, because the only criteria that should be considered when selecting judges are their character, their knowledge of law, and their commitment to deciding cases

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as the law dictates. Thus, the two first witnesses—Lloyd Cutler, White House counsel to Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, and Boyden Gray, White House counsel to the first President Bush and presumably an advisor to the second—seemed to surprise Senator Schumer at the first of these hearings, held June 26, when they argued that it was wrong to consider ideology in judicial selection.

Cutler and Gray, as spectacularly accomplished *eminences grises*, were allocated a whole panel to themselves, the opening act in the Washington mini-drama. Perhaps the second panel at the hearing (of which I was a member) was more what Senator Schumer desired. Three of our panelists—Marsha Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center; Laurence Tribe, a Harvard law professor; and Cass Sunstein, a law professor at the University of Chicago—testified that ideology did indeed matter, and that it was the job of the Senate to make sure that no single ideology was allowed to dominate the bench. This was a not-too-veiled way of warning George W. Bush that, if he thought he was going to appoint judges like Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas (as he had promised on the campaign trail), he had another think coming. Professor Sunstein even went so far as to say that, in his view, a bench composed only of Scalias and Thomases would be a very bad thing.

The terror of Scalia and Thomas, of course, is that they have been most averse to the notion that judges ought to make rulings according to their personal understanding of appropriate social policy. They have clearly espoused a conception of the judicial role as subservient to the legislative branch and to the people when the law needs to be changed and have argued that the only appropriate interpretive strategy is to follow the original intent of the Constitution or statutes. All of these beliefs are now virtually anathema in the legal academy, where students learn that we have a "living Constitution" subject to judicial manipulation, and that the insight of such "legal realists" as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and Jerome Frank (that judges inevitably must play a legislative role) gives judges a great opportunity to formulate new social rules.

The views of the academy were those of the majority of the justices of both the Warren and Burger Courts, and those views led to the federal courts, in particular, dictating state and local policy in areas of education, abortion, religion, affirmative action, criminal procedure, and legislative redistricting. In the waning years of the 20th century, the Rehnquist Court began to show signs of cutting back on the authority of the federal government (particularly the courts) and returning the Constitution to the original understanding, in which state and local governments were the primary lawmakers for our nation.

The Framers believed that liberty was best ensured if judges did not make law and if the governments closest to the people were entrusted with the greatest policy roles. Three of us on the second panel (myself, Eugene Volokh of the UCLA Law School, and Clint Bolick of the Washington-based Institute for Justice) tried to remind Senator Schumer and his colleagues of these beliefs, arguing that—far from being threats to liberty—Scalia's and Thomas's views were the only way of actually preserving the kind of political system the Framers envisioned. The Republican senators on the subcommittee—notably Jeff Sessions of Alabama—clearly got the message, while Senator Schumer, Marsha Greenberger, and Professors Tribe and Sunstein did not. For them, alas, law seems to be politics by other means, and even though the President's party lost control of the Senate, something like horse-trading will be the means of picking judges. ("You give us a couple of Warrens and Brennans, we'll let you have a Scalia and a Thomas.") There is something to be said for that approach when staffing panels for hearings. There is nothing good to be said for it when selecting judges, at least if you want a government of laws, not of men.

(Editor's note: The full text of Dr. Presser's written testimony before Senator Schumer's subcommittee is available at www.ChroniclesMagazine.org.*)*

—Stephen B. Presser

THE PUTIN-BUSH MINI-SUMMIT was considered by most Moscow pundits to be a success, with the two more or less agreeing to disagree about ABM, nuclear-missile defense (NMD), and NATO expansion—for now, anyway. President Bush did not pressure Vladimir Putin about Chechnya, but one point that he ever-so-gently raised did irk the Little Colonel, according to Kremlin deep throats, whose frequent reports created the impression that the Kremlin walls are about as impregnable as an egg carton. The Americans just won't let go of the Vladimir Gusinsky affair.

Chronicles readers know the real story: The "media magnate"/oligarch/gangster/professional Jewish victim Gusinsky was the big loser in the intra-Kremlin intrigues that accompanied Boris Yeltsin's retirement, with rival clan structures close to Yeltsin ("the family") ultimately winning the battle to choose Boris I's anointed successor. After "the family" helped arrange a splendid little war in Chechnya to boost his electoral prospects, ex-KGB officer Putin immediately moved to finish off "the Goose," with the Kremlin exerting pressure on natural-gas monopoly Gazprom to call in its loans to Gusinsky's Media Most company, which controlled Russia's only privately held TV station, NTV. The "special services" tacked on a few embezzlement charges and other trimmings for good measure, and Gusinsky was soon an oligarch-in-exile, his media assets being absorbed by Kremlin-friendly "businessmen." End of story, right?

Wrong. The Goose, you see, has powerful friends, being a mover and shaker in the World Jewish Congress, an Israeli citizen with ties to "Russian-speaking" Tel Aviv mafiosi and politicians, and a business partner of the *Washington Post* and of the establishment weekly *Newsweek*. He also has a few close friends in the U.S. Congress, most notably Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA). The congressman's ties to the Goose go back to the mid-1990's, when Lantos first rose to defend Gusinsky from the 1995 attacks of Yeltsin bodyguard Aleksandr Korzhakov, whose Kremlin security goons were roughing up the Goose's soldiers. (Think of Korzhakov as Yeltsin's Lucca Brazzi.) Lantos, an Hungarian import who, like many others, has made a career out of being a professional "holocaust survivor," instantly saw the wicked hand of Russian fascism—and not the equivalent of a Chicago gang war—behind the attacks. Congress duly passed a resolution in support of "businessman" Gusinsky, and Yeltsin later fired Korzhakov.

Meanwhile, the Goose—possibly through Lantos—was busy networking in the Land of the Free. Lantos' ally in Congress, Don Bunker, retired to the greener pastures of lobbying (he works for the p.r. and lobbying firm APCO) and took Gusinsky as a client. Gusinsky gained another close personal friend in Robert Strauss, a former ambassador to Russia, head of the U.S.-Russia Business Council, and partner of the law firm/lobbying

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group Akin Gump. Strauss, who gained a reputation as a man-about-town in Washington while a Democratic Party fixer, helped American businesses profit from the insider privatization deals of the Yeltsin era and, like Bunker, knew a good lobbying opportunity when he saw one: Akin Gump suddenly discovered it was very concerned about "freedom of the press" in Russia and enlisted Toby Goti, freshly retired chief of the State Department's intelligence division, to remind U.S. congressmen of the importance of global democratization. Akin Gump, APCO, Goti, and Mr. Bunker have been steady contributors to Lantos' political war chest.

Lantos sponsored a resolution in May, calling on the G-8 group of industrialized powers to kick Russia out in view of its undemocratic behavior toward the Goose (something the high rollers of global democracy did not worry about when Yeltsin was literally blasting the Russian parliament in 1993). The *Washington Post*, Akin Gump, APCO, and various "friends of Goose" mounted a full-court press on Bush before the summit. The White House counterattacked through the Republican-connected head of the Nixon Center think tank, Dmitri Simes, who pointed out in a letter to the *Post* that the "Russian oligarchs'" ill-gotten gains were now at work in D.C. "buying the best representation" available, including "former ambassadors, former cabinet members," and "former senators." Simes, who has to work in this town, omitted mention of current congressmen.

The President was obviously resisting, but the shift of power to the Democrats in the Senate, his big plans for NMD, and his collapsing political agenda (his obvious defeats on tax cuts and education, for example) meant Bush II could not entirely ignore the siren call of global democracy. Besides, there are those stories circulating about Dick Cheney lobbying for the oil company Haliburton, which has business ties to Russia's TNK oil company, which is controlled by the Alfa Group, which, in turn, works hand-in-glove with Russian organized crime. So George, Jr., just had to bring up that Gusinsky business again.

Meanwhile, one-time Gusinsky rival and former "Oligarch No. 1" Boris Abramovich Berezovsky (BAB), after falling out with "the family," arrived in New York along with his wife, under-aged mistress, and assorted burly business associates. BAB is now the object of a Kremlin-backed criminal investigation, so he has set himself up as a defender of Russian democracy and is canvassing his American contacts for potential business partners. The word is out that the Goose is willing to share the influence of his American friends with BAB for a price. What that price might be is anybody's guess; rumor has it that BAB is seeking an audience with White House officials.

—*Denis Petrov*

SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC's delivery to a NATO airbase in Tuzla marks the end of an era—but which one? It appears to conclude the period in which the Serbian people tried to find leaders who would not accept that their national interests should be defined either by a socialist Yugoslavia or by the great powers. Their willingness to elect Vojislav Kostunica probably depended on the notion that he was more of a patriot than his predecessor and that he would keep his promise not to accept the jurisdiction of a foreign court created as an instrument of propaganda by Serbia's enemies. Zoran Djindjic might have been unelectable. But even he was not an overt anti-nationalist, and it was possible to imagine that the foreign policy of the victorious coalition would combine Kostunica's patriotism with Djindjic's pragmatism. It could have produced a stable policy—based on legal self-respect and technical cooperation with The Hague War Crimes Tribunal (ICTY)—which most of Europe would accept because Europe is more interested in stability and democracy than in the project of Serb submission prescribed by Zagreb and Washington. We now know that this has not happened. Serbia could not have experienced a more humiliating surrender to ICTY than to watch its ministers defy their constitutional court on their high holy day, Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day). The people did not vote for it; the law did not permit it; and the highest court—whatever its composition—had ordered otherwise.

By the time Milosevic was sent to The Hague, Kostunica had already conceded the essential principle and agreed that extradition should be made possible by law or by federal decree. The foreign aid America might have withheld in June would, no doubt, have been available slightly later, after Belgrade had sorted out its lingering scruples. The decision to submit and to take the money had already been internalized. The sudden rush to Tuzla airfield was designed, above all, to break the will of a stubborn Serbia.

The Vidovdan capitulation was the moment of truth between the Serbian people and the anti-nationalist section of the intelligentsia. The political venom of the action, the wild impatience at Serbian pride, and the reckless contempt for Serbian democracy, law, values, and self-respect were all perfectly deliberate. They represent the rejection of everything that Serbia has done and stood for: defiance of the "international community," the illusions of sovereignty, the possibility of patriotism in arms. The theory that the will of the international community is the supreme law of the land has been imposed like a lash on the back of every citizen.

This capitulation did not need to happen. Milosevic might have been on trial in Belgrade by now, facing charges which had not even been laid against him at The Hague when the Vidovdan abduction took place. If such a trial had been under way—with everyone gripped by new testimony—no one would have dared to interrupt the proceedings with an illegal kidnapping on behalf of The Hague's chief prosecutor, Carla del Ponte. Those responsible would have ended up in prison. Now, a probing, discursive, and surprising trial of Milosevic will never take place. What we will have is a much more technical, sterilized, and evasive legal process. There were people who wanted a real trial in Belgrade, but they were willing to be overruled by those with stronger convictions. For President Kostunica (perhaps the biggest loser in the affair), there may be a story of covert pressure from countries he wanted to trust. There was also a moment of self-understanding: that the era of crisis should not be prolonged by any choice of his. He might have defied the United States with sufficient backing but not, ultimately, against a nominal political majority. Somehow, he found himself grudgingly agreeing with his interlocutors that the preference of the Serbian people could be set aside.

Why has the party of Serbian inadequacy been so effective? It may be the energizing tonic of foreign patronage. But the true explanation is probably long-term. The belief that submission to Europe is essential is, at bottom, an economic theory that unites extreme

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free-market liberals—the sort who will impose free-market solutions before there is a market—and ex-communists looking for jobs in economic administration. The theory satisfies the bureaucratic need for an orthodoxy.

The Yugoslav economy was ruined long before 1991. It was in shambles when Tito died. But the invocation of Europe is simply implausible. Europe never really wanted to deal with Yugoslavia—and it still doesn't. It did not impose defeat on Serbia—Milosevic did that—and it did not try to overthrow Milosevic. It left the Albanian problem to the Americans. The only European policy decision was to let German dislike of Yugoslavia take its course. There is no European reconstruction policy today. Much of the money that is available is intended to help Balkan countries pay the interest on their loans and continue publishing glossy material about free markets.

What Serbia needs is economic discipline for the managerial class as severe as that long imposed on ordinary working people. Just as Britain was ruined as an industrial power after 1945 by large soft loans that permitted middle-class life to erode sweetly for two decades while Britain's industrial base was eliminated by an overvalued currency, Balkan states that depend on global or E.U. financial institutions will never flourish. Branko Horvat has warned Croatia that the European Union will not admit the Balkan states in the foreseeable future. The Austro-German borderland—Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Poland—may get in soon, but even the admission of Hungary is doubtful. The rest will get little money and less attention. The only chance for impoverished Eastern Europe is regional cooperation and the creation of new, internal sources of finance.

The Vidovdan abduction represents a genuflection to great powers whose long-term behavior it will not influence. Unfortunately, it explodes the self-respect and patriotic solidarity that is indispensable for slow, self-financed economic revival. The miserable condition of the people calls out for redress, and if the Serbian people had demanded extradition, no one would have blamed them. But it was not the common people—the sufferers—who demanded the fire sale of their dignity to secure U.S. aid.

Modern states need a doctrine of government; they cannot be managed on the basis of pragmatism alone—unless they are to be dependencies. Serbia is committed to the quest for dependency. The governing instinct in Belgrade is to look good to the powerful, to sing their song. A period as the valued client of Germany, or even America, might make sense, but is it possible? There is little evidence yet that Milosevic's abduction is even the preamble to such an arrangement. But the taste of Western flattery is undoubtedly sweet.

—Michael Stenton

AMOS PERLMUTTER, R.I.P. As a man and scholar, Amos Perlmutter (1931-2001) stood out for his intellectual honesty, although rectitude in this case was wedded to a jovial personality and an unfailing wit. Having emigrated as a child alongside his parents and sister from Europe to Israel, Amos served his adopted country as a military officer. By all accounts, he had served in three Arab-Israeli wars, though he treated his military experiences in an offhanded way, without dwelling on the risks to life he had incurred. He came to the United States to complete his education, receiving a doctorate in political science at Harvard and subsequently teaching there and at American University. Among his 16 books and multitudinous articles are studies on authoritarian government and on the building of the Israeli armed forces, a biography of Menachem Begin, and an exploration of the troubled relations between FDR and Stalin (published in 1994 by the University of Missouri Press).

In all of his major work, Amos was never shy about expressing unfashionable views. In accordance with his stated reverence for George C. Patton, he displayed a martial disregard for the social implications of what he said and published. Despite his longtime association with the right in both Israel and the United States, Amos published a highly critical study of Israeli Premier Begin, whom he showed to be a whiny, inept successor of the earlier right-wing Jewish nationalist Zeev Jabotinsky. Having been commissioned by *Policy Review* to discuss what some thought to be a flattering biography, I saw my piece killed when I discovered that Amos had not produced the desired puffery. When I asked why he had written such a biography given his likely markets, he explained quite simply: "That's where the research took me!" (To my misfortune, Amos wrote a professional recommendation for me that stressed our shared quality of speaking our minds, which, he went on to observe, were explosively conservative.)

His death in June came as unexpected news. Although we had seen little of each other since I left suburban Washington, I continued to read Amos's publications and looked forward to meeting him at professional gatherings. His distaste for p.c. moralizing was vocal and widely known; it was pure delight to watch him lash out in anger after listening to some annoying windbag who had cornered him at a meeting or lecture. (Feminists were his special *bêtes noires*.) A few days before his death from intestinal cancer (a condition he had kept hidden from his friends), Amos did an unforgettable kindness, faxing to my prospective publisher a letter full of high (and perhaps excessive) praise for a book that is now at press. It pains me to think of the discomfort to a very sick man caused by this act, but it is gratifying nonetheless to recall this final kindness from a generous and honorable spirit.

—Paul Gottfried

OBITER DICTA: We're pleased to announce the first of three new quarterly columns, which will alternate on p. 13. In *Breaking Glass*, *Chronicles* contributing editor **Philip Jenkins** will wield his acerbic wit to expose the truth about the "smelly little orthodoxies" of our time. You will find Dr. Jenkins' column in the March, June, September, and December issues.

Our poet this month is **Donald Carlson** of Fort Worth, Texas. Mr. Carlson teaches English at a private school in Fort Worth and, on occasion, at the College of St. Thomas More. His poetry has also appeared in *Poem* and the *Pawn Review*.

Chronicles is illustrated this month by St. Petersburg native **Anatol Woolf**, who, in addition to freelance work, has designed sets for theaters in Russia and provided illustrations for St. Petersburg Textbook Publishers. Since coming to America in 1987, Mr. Woolf has been a frequent contributing artist to *Chronicles*, as well as to the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, *Policy Review*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Legal Times*, and *Cricket*. Mr. Woolf works with a variety of materials, from watercolors to pencil to acrylic. Further samples of his work are available on his Web page: *www.netcom.com/~a.woolf/*.

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Friday Breakfast

by Thomas Fleming

Shakespeare and the Cannibals

Robinson Crusoe, as the lit boys would say, is an "iconic" character, whose mastery over nature—and over the savage Friday—expresses the West's sometimes contemptuous sense of superiority over other cultures. In the 500-year-long iconoclastic age that is just now coming to an end, icons are made only to be broken, and in such films as *Man Friday* (1975) and, more particularly, *Crusoe* (1988), starring Rockford's own Aidan Quinn, the European is viewed as the enemy of nature and the destroyer of all that is real and authentic in human life. However, *Crusoe* turns out well in the end: After being subjected to a properly multicultural indoctrination, Quinn finally wakes up, joins the other side, and liberates a slave from a European ship.

Crusoe's indoctrination is virtually identical with the cultural education given to American (and European) students at every level. If the old "bigotry" taught us "European good, others bad," the new bigotry, without ever enlightening students on the facts of Chinese civilization or Aztec culture, simply reverses the terms. Most Americans know all this, or ought to. Students of literary history will recall that French surrealists, back in the 1920's, were saying much the same thing, and a few scholars might even be able to trace the anti-Western tradition back to 18th-century French intellectuals such as Voltaire and Montesquieu, who used oriental aliens as positive foils for debunking their own country's traditions.

In some cases (like that of T.E. Lawrence or Lafcadio Hearne), multiculturalism may be no more than the reaction of (often weak) Western minds to the shock of an alien culture. But there is more to multiculturalism than a fascination with the alien. Fundamental to the quest for diversity is an explicit hatred of all things European, Christian, and white, and here the fault does not lie with the politicians of both parties who refuse to defend our borders against the invasion that is called "immigration" or even with the handful of ne'er-do-wells who direct and woman the cultural programs of high schools and universities. The fault, alas, lies deep in the origins of our own modern West, within the Renaissance itself, and unless we can free ourselves of the superstitions we began to adopt in the 16th century, we shall never breathe the pure, free air of Christendom again.

Obviously, the late Renaissance is a brilliant period in which Western artists and intellectuals created masterpieces, while European adventurers opened up the New World. It represents one of the greatest expansions of Western man in all of our history. It is also, however, a retreat. In the preceding century, Western Christians had not only allowed the Turks to conquer the Serbian and Byzantine empires, but they had learned to accept the presence of an Islamic empire on European soil. In time, the French and English would prefer Turkish advances to the possibility of a consolidated Habsburg power in Europe. There were distinguished exceptions, of course, like the first great American, John Smith, who enlisted as a mercenary and, in 1600, went to fight against the Turks.

But the painful fact is that Europe's concentration on the New World is, in part, a confession of failure. Even the redoubtable Captain John Smith returned from Transylvania to seek his fortune in Virginia. We abandoned our Christian brothers in the Middle East, Greece, and the Balkans and allowed them to be murdered, raped, enslaved, and oppressed by the Turks. But, what the heck, Columbus found out that we might reach the Orient by going in the other direction, and right between us and China lay two vast continents to explore, exploit, and colonize.

The Spanish and French even came to Christianize. Many of the early priests were serious Christians, and they complained about Columbus and his successors, who were interested more in enslaving than in converting the natives. Bartolme de las Casas went to an extreme in defending Indians against the charge that they routinely killed the innocent and violated the basic terms of natural law (guilty on both counts!), but he also knew firsthand what the Indians were suffering at the hands of their conquerors. His father had sailed with Columbus, and before becoming a Dominican father, he had been a planter. He did not oppose colonization *per se*, which he saw as an occasion for converting the Indians, but in his natural and laudable zeal to defend the helpless natives from exploitation, he considerably exaggerated their merits and virtues, thus setting the stage for the first great promoter of Western self-hatred. He also bears responsibility for the importation of African slaves into the New World.

Las Casas' major historical work was not published until the 19th century, but his arguments and writings had caused a stir for decades, when Montaigne wrote his "*Essai des Cannibales*" in 1580. How much he had heard—much less read—of Las Casas remains a mystery, but the Christian defense of Native Americans, passing into the hands of a master ironist, was forged into a major weapon to be deployed against Christendom itself.

There is little to be gained from repeating the case against Montaigne: his sly campaign to undermine Christianity, his sexual obsessions, his destructive theories of child-rearing and education (see "Burn This Book," *Perspective*, September 2000) or even the dishonesty of his "Cannibals" essay, in which he feigns a knowledge of Brazilian natives he could not have had—Montaigne's imaginary cannibals do not seek wealth or status, and their language is "sweet, with a pleasing sound, whose endings are reminiscent of Greek in its endings."

Montaigne has several purposes in this famous essay: Primarily, he wants to show, as when he contrasts the healthy Brazilians with the puny Charles IX, that French institutions are so corrupt that even savages are superior to the French. His larger

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purpose, however, is to debunk the entire concept of higher and lower civilizations, declaring that "there is nothing barbarous and savage in this people . . . except that each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own custom."

This ulterior motive explains the curious beginning of the essay, which invokes King Pyrrhus's famous observation that the Romans might be barbarians (a term the Greeks applied to all foreigners), but their troop formations were anything but barbaric. The implication, that the difference between Europeans and Indians was no greater than that between Greeks and Romans (or that Brazilians spoke a classical language), would have been ridiculed if Montaigne had stated it openly, but he is clever enough not to telegraph his punches.

Is it irony or historical fate that European man should have begun to embrace noble savagery, natural innocence, and the anti-Christian pursuit of false gods at the very time in which he was turning his back on the Christian East and destroying the savage cultures of the Americas? Perhaps the gentle Spanish Dominican had seen the writing on the wall five centuries ago.

Over the past ten years, the Turks and their coreligionists have again been knocking at the gates, and not just of Belgrade, Budapest, and Vienna, but of Paris, Berlin, and Washington, and the Western response remains what it has been since Montaigne and Voltaire: irony, indecision, and self-hatred. This defeatism is no longer restricted to effeminate intellectuals and elite classes with too much time on their hands; hatred of our ancestors, our civilization, and ourselves is the new jingoism, just as stupid as the old jingoism and vastly more destructive. The real "suicide of the West" should never have been measured by our susceptibility to the Marxian heresy but by the degree to which we are turning against our own civilization. Marxism, evil as it is, is only a minor symptom of a deeper sickness.

The progress of self-hatred in America, just in the past generation (that is, roughly 30 years), should inspire awe. In the Kennedy years, we were still—at least on the surface—an exuberant European colony, leading the free world in its democratic-socialist struggle against revolutionary communism, sending our bright young things around the world to teach those poor, benighted primitives how to become Americans. Our education, impoverished and feeble as it was, paid lip-service to the Western classics, and if students did not actually read much Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare, they had probably heard of them and glanced through the *Cliff's Notes* on Julius Caesar long enough to catch an allusion to the "Ides of March" in the name of a 60's pop band, and if we had never seen Rossini's *Barber of Seville*, we knew enough to get the joke in Warner Bros. "Rabbit of Seville." That time is as foreign to us as England in the days of Elizabeth and James, and it is almost as superior to our own age as the age of Elizabeth was superior to the age of Ike.

Now we live in the age of apologizing—to women and homosexuals, to Africans and Indians, to Jews and Muslims—and even, from the Pope, a perfunctory "I'm sorry for what other people did a long, long time ago" to Orthodox Christians. And despite the feeble efforts of "cultural conservatives" (What wry humor that fraudulent term now elicits!) and of the self-appointed critics of multiculturalism, the great retreat from Christendom proceeds at an ever faster pace.

The American melting pot is hardly a likely place from which to stage the counterattack. Fewer and fewer of us even have an ancestry with which we can identify ourselves. Like it or not, Lenny Kravitz and Tiger Woods (visiting Rockford for a minority golf clinic even as I write these lines) may be the exemplary Americans of our time. We lapse from being Anglo-American or Polish American into being generically American, which—loosely interpreted—now seems to convey no more than rootless hedonism, moral and mental immaturity, and an obsession with theme parks. As children, they live for the moment they can visit Disney World and Six Flags, and as *faux* grown-ups, they save up all year long to afford Vegas or Cancun or a Princess cruise.

Ethnic confusion is only one reason (and not the most significant) why even conservative Americans, who campaign against high taxes, pornography, and infanticide, will scarcely lift a finger either to limit immigration or to arrest the onrushing tide of compulsory uniform diversity. The best they can do is to turn the enemy's arguments against them.

"Your people enslaved my people," shrieks the Afrocentrist.

"Yeah, well, your people enslaved each other," retorts the Eurocentrist.

"Your ancestors were bigots," sings the anti-Christian chorus of racial and sexual minorities.

"So's your old man," goes the best answer the opponents of multiculturalism have given, insisting that the Western tradition is more tolerant, more open to diversity, less rooted, and less traditional than any of its competitors. But even if the ex-Marxists (like the late Sidney Hook) who make this argument were right, no civilized person would want to live in their Karl Popper/George Soros vision of the Open Society. If the only alternative to multiculturalism is the global culture promoted by democratic capitalists, we had better go to a tanning spa and learn Mexican Spanish or start wearing baggy trousers below the navel, listen to hip-hop, and proclaim ourselves "wiggers." (Better a wigger than a Whigger.)

I know all about what the anti-multiculturalists do not like, but I am waiting to hear what it is they *like*—apart from platitudes about democracy and contempt for other people because they are other. Negative criticism has its uses—otherwise we should not be in business—but the response to those who are in the business of "Hating Whitey" has to be something better than simply hating those who hate whitey.

There were Catholics and Protestants who debunked Montaigne in the 16th century, but the most effective response to his glorification of the cannibals was and remains Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a play which gives no quarter to Caliban (a profoundly ignoble savage) but also holds out the noblest possible vision of Western man and his tragic project of transcending human limitations. Prospero can perform miracles, but his confidence in supernatural technology has deluded him into thinking he can manage the dukedom of Milan by staying holed up in his library.

Indeed, for all his nobility and magic, Prospero has also been a fool who could not fully grasp the human motivations of his enemies. He triumphs in the end, partly through the power of his magic but also because his very humanity causes the king of Naples to repent, just as Miranda's beauty wins the heart of the king's son. In the end, Prospero is restored to his dukedom, and the fairies are dismissed in a speech that is often taken as Shakespeare's farewell to the theater.

The Tempest is a thoroughly Christian answer to the multiculturalists, which may explain why the critics of multiculturalism do not read Shakespeare—or any other English classic. In

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Crusoe's place, they would have begun by indoctrinating Friday into the theory of class struggle and ended by having him for breakfast. Shakespeare, by contrast, understands human weakness, and he holds out hope even for the savage Caliban, once he comes to his senses and realizes that, in following a butler instead of a duke, he was "an ass . . . to take this drunkard for a god." Prospero himself, who has perhaps relied too much on fairy spirits for his own good, assures us in the last lines of the play, that

> . . . my ending is despair
> Unless I be relieved by prayer
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself and frees all faults,
> As you from crimes would pardon'd be
> Let your indulgence set me free.

In this conventional appeal for applause, Shakespeare has inserted the central insight of Christian morality, an enduring challenge to the poisonous lies of Europhobia and of the futile response mounted by those who are as alienated as any Aztec from the civilization of Shakespeare.

* * *

Go to www.ChroniclesMagazine.org *to find an e-text of* The Tempest *and send your comments to our readers' forum on Shakespeare v. Montaigne, part of* Chronicles' *lifetime program in self-education.*

Crazy Agnes

by Donald Carlson

She lifts her finger to the passing world.
Pathetic! Her wits have come unfurled.
Love of Jesus, can't anything be done?
We wonder why they let her carry on.
Each day as decent folk drive by, alarmed,
She waves that bony digit like a spell
To penetrate the shiny molded shell
That lets us pass, at any rate, unharmed.

She curses at the plant across the road,
Where management drives hard with Satan's goad.
At night six devils creep into her room
To pinch and nibble at her in the gloom.
We know these visits come because she's odd.
She couldn't really be a lamb of God.

DICTATIONS

Diffr'nt Strokes Move the World

We are so used to living with meaningless expressions that we hardly notice when new absurdities are foisted upon us. "Multicultural" is supposed to suggest openness to different cultures. But since each culture, to the extent that it is distinctive, is unique, to be properly "multicultural," would be the intellectual equivalent of being in a dozen places at the same time. The real object of all multicultural education is to deprive its American and European victims of every last shred and tatter of their own cultural background and render them members of an "acultural" proletariat.

"Diversity" is even more absurd. In a society that encouraged diversity, the government would simply leave everyone alone to pursue his own tastes according to the culture in which he was born and bred. But the proponents of diversity are not at all interested in such a *laissez-faire* approach. The cult of "diversity" has only one objective: to replace Christendom with a uniform "world" culture, which (like "world music") borrows a few rags and tatters of conflicting cultural traditions and stitches them, as brightly colored patches, into the gigantic plastic tarp that will cover the globe and smother every cultural tradition "from China to Peru."

The true meaning of "diversity" ("the condition of being unlike," as the OED defines it) is revealed by the word itself, which is derived from Latin *diversus* (opposed, different), the participle of *diverto* (to turn against or away from something). The closely related "perversity" (from Latin *perverto*, to turn away from what is right) would do as well, if it did not suggest there are standards of right and wrong. Those who want to turn away from their own culture and who spend their lives opposing its fundamental assumptions have found the perfect word to sum up their cultural self-hatred.

For over 20 years, diversity has been a code word for the intolerant toleration that sailed, for a time, under the flag of "political correctness." René Dubos, the ecological globalist who gave us the pernicious phrase "think globally, act locally" (translation: think globally and work to subordinate your hometown to the global culture), summed up the totalitarian essence of diversity: "Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue; it makes it a requirement for survival." While there are people whose manners (such practices as cannibalism, incest, drug use, rape, human sacrifice) offend those of us who have been brought up in the Western tradition, it is up to the West to hold its nose and refuse to pass judgment. What Dubos meant, of course, was that the West could remain Western only up to the point that it implied no value-judgment against anything non-Western, which is to be not Western at all.

—Humpty Dumpty

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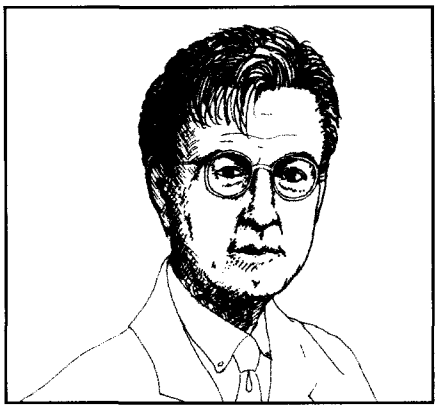
by Philip Jenkins

Obligatory Holocausts



I feel sorry for Afrocentrists—those weird and wonderful folk who claim that civilization, philosophy, and science were discovered in ancient Africa, before being stolen by the white man. True, members of the movement are cranks, with nothing worthwhile to support their positions, but they are no more ridiculous than many other historians who dominate the intellectual mainstream.

To illustrate this, let me point to the "American Holocaust" story that can fairly be described as scholarly orthodoxy. The story goes like this: Before the European invasion of 1492, the New World was home to a vast population, often placed around 100 million. Mexico alone had 25 million people, and New World cities dwarfed such European communities as Paris and Rome. Visitors to the great New Mexico site of Chaco Canyon are told that the population there would actually have exceeded that of medieval London. After the conquest, a combination of brutal treatment and European diseases caused a catastrophic decline in native populations—by 90 percent or more in many areas. The European civilizations that emerged in the New World were literally built upon the bones of tens of millions of slaughtered victims. Every day of their lives, Americans are walking through graveyards.

A great deal about this story should inspire suspicion. For one thing, the account of European motives and behavior fits too well with contemporary academic politics to be plausible. Above all, this seems to be yet another of the obligatory holocausts that have become so fashionable in the creation of victimologies. In the 1940's, the Jews suffered an appallingly genuine outbreak of mass murder, as did other European communities, like the Poles and Ukrainians. In subsequent years, though, other groups have tried to construct their own parallel experiences, always with impressive-sounding numbers, but never with anything like the historical evidence we can find concerning the World War II era. Feminists and pagans look to the tens of millions of witches supposedly killed during the "burning times" in early modern Europe; African-Americans cite 60 million or so victims murdered by the slave trade; and anyone wishing to discredit American history points to the American genocide, the "Great Dying."

The idea of a demographic collapse in the Americas was popularized by widely read historians like William McNeill, while David Stannard coined the term "American Holocaust" in his 1992 book of that name. Though the idea has gained the status of a social fact, it is simply wrong. The supporting data, which had been questioned for some years, were decisively discredited in a fine book by David P. Henige, appropriately titled *Numbers From Nowhere* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).

In order to judge the truth of "genocide" charges, we would need to know roughly what the population of the Americas was in, say, 1480, and what it was a century later. We are on reasonably solid ground with the later figures, but pre-contact data is very hard to come by. Before the 1940's, most scholars would have estimated the pre-Columbian population at around eight or ten million for the whole of North and South America combined. If that is correct, then the Americas certainly suffered from European-introduced plagues, but the decline in population was only a fraction of what we are told in the "genocide" story. We are talking about two or three million disease-related deaths, not 90 million: a plague, not a genocide.

So why did anyone ever believe differently? In essence, demographic historians found what appeared to be tax records for colonial Mexico, and used wildly implausible multipliers to convert the households recorded there into population statistics. Even if these projections were true, they would only inflate the population of central Mexico. But there was a second phase, in which historians (I use the word loosely) started applying the same hyperbolic principles across the continent. North America above the Rio Grande can plausibly be estimated to have had around two million people in 1492. By the 1990's, overheated scholarly books were giving contact-era figures of seven or ten million in North America, estimating a ludicrous four million in the Mississippi Valley alone.

At every stage, the improbability of these claims is self-evident. Just where did all these people live? At Chaco Canyon, which supposedly housed 30,000 residents, there is no evidence whatever that the great "apartment" structures were residential: Far from being "bigger than London," Chaco was barely even a village. And any time we find reasonably hard data about actual Indian populations, they are astonishingly small. Any reader of colonial history knows of the vast political influence wielded by the legendary Iroquois Confederacy, that looming presence that played English and French empires off against each other for a century. Who would have thought that this military juggernaut never mobilized more than 5,000 or so warriors at its height? Or that the medieval population of these tribes, which are among the best studied of any native community, was in the low thousands, not even the tens of thousands?

Why, then, have scholars permitted themselves to engage in such consistent self-delusion? The reasons, unfortunately, are obvious: The worse the atrocity of the conquest, the greater the guilt to be expiated by the modern-day descendants of the conquerors. And while conscience demanded that we place the number of victims as high as possible, any contrary argument, any expression of doubt, would be seen as acquiescence to genocide.

Our standard historical view of the Columbian era and the European contact with the Americas is therefore wildly inaccurate, the result of politicized scholarship. Unfortunately, nobody seems concerned about discrediting the modern-day myths. Remind me: Just why do we pick on the crazy Afrocentrists?

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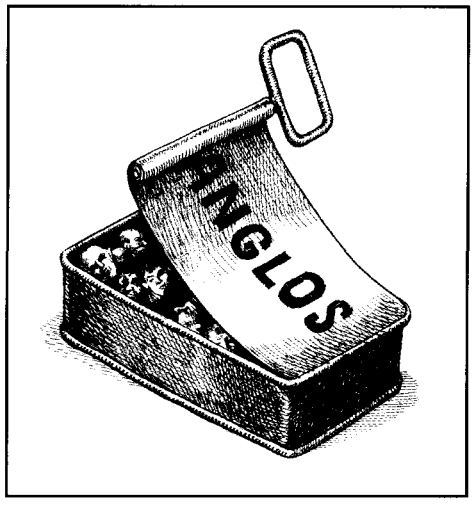
Real Diversity

by Roger D. McGrath



Anatol Woolf

"By Tre, Pol, or Pen ye may know most Cornishmen." This simple rhyme was known to nearly everyone in the mining camps of the Old West and probably to much of the general population in America during the 19th century. Treloar, Trevelyan, and Tremaine were especially common names on the mining frontier, as were Penrose, Penhall, and Pender. Less common but not unusual were Polglase, Polkinghorne, and Polmear. Cornishmen, one and all. In America, they became known as "Cousin Jacks." They all seemed to have a cousin Jack back home who would be just right for the latest job-opening in the mine. They were such skilled hard-rock miners that they demanded to work for a percentage of the profits rather than daily wages. Needing the expertise of the Cornishmen, the mine owners readily complied. Once the placer deposits had been exhausted and hard-rock mining commenced, it was time to bring in the Cornishmen. Camp after camp filled with Cousin Jacks until they represented more than ten percent of the population in most mining districts. In Grass Valley, in the heart of the California Mother Lode, they made up nearly 20 percent of the town's population.

Since prehistoric times, the Cornish—a Celtic people—have inhabited Cornwall, an 80-mile-long peninsula in southwestern Britain. A beautiful but rocky and rugged land where farming was difficult, Cornwall was blessed with a wealth of mineral resources. The Cornish have been mining that wealth for more than 2,000 years. They traded tin to the Phoenicians and later to the Romans, and conducted trade in tin and copper with foreign peoples for hundreds of years. When England began acquiring an empire, Cornishmen, with their great mining expertise, were sent to the far reaches of the empire—to America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. "Wherever there is a hole in the earth," according to an old saw, "you will find a Cornishman at the bottom of it."

By the turn of the 19th century, Cornishmen were already prominent in the iron mines of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. During the 1840's, thousands of them settled in the lead-mining region of the upper Mississippi Valley. Centered on Mineral Point, Wisconsin, Cornish settlement soon spilled into the neighboring states of Iowa and Illinois. Cornishmen, like nearly everyone else, rushed to the California goldfields after news of James Marshall's discovery spread.

However, it was not until the placers were exhausted and it became necessary to tunnel into the granite core of the Sierra Nevada that the Cornish rose to prominence. The business of sinking shafts, tunneling, excavating, timbering, using explosives, and operating power tools called for Cornishmen. They had a virtual monopoly on several specialized tasks, including operating the engines that pumped water from the mines. Their skills were vital to the development of mining not only in California but throughout the West. In the 1850's, Grass Valley became a kind of outdoor laboratory for inventing and testing equipment and mining processes, including rotary stamps for crushing ore, hydraulic operations, and chlorination during milling to increase the amount of gold recovered.

Cornishmen made wrestling matches a feature of mining-camp life. In their own national tradition, wrestling played an important role. Legend has it that a Cornish champion, Goemor, wrestled and defeated a Trojan hero, Corineus, in an epic contest in 1000 B.C. Cornish wrestlers, serving as soldiers in an English army, fought at Agincourt in 1415 under a banner that is still the symbol of the Cornish Wrestling Association.

Cornishmen also brought Methodism to the camps. Back home, the Cornish, especially the miners, had embraced Methodism from the first. The Cornish were not only passionate Methodists but passionate singers of Charles Wesley's many

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hymns. Cornish choirs quickly became a part of life in Western mining towns. The Grass Valley Cornish Choir gained national renown by the 1890's and eventually performed for several American presidents.

The Cornish introduced and made the pasty a staple of the diet of miners working long hours underground. Consisting of a hearty helping of meat and vegetables in a crimped crust of pastry, the pasty provided enough fuel for a long shift in the bowels of a mine. Cornish women—"Cousin Jennys"—prided themselves on their pasties. Today, the frozen-food section of the market is full of modern versions of the pasty.

Despite all this, my college students usually give me blank stares when I ask them to identify and describe the Cornish. On one occasion, a student with a sense of humor (I think) said she knew nothing about the Cornish but did know of a recipe for Cornish game hen stuffed with wild rice. I also ask students to locate Cornwall. Again, there is usually no response. "OK, the Gilbert and Sullivan musical, *The Pirates of Penzance*, is a clue," I tell them. "Now where is Penzance?" Blank stares.

The Cornish have become a non-people. They no longer count. In American schools, "diversity" means only differences in physiognomy and skin color. Whites are a monolithic group. They are without peoples who contribute to "our richly diverse society." Such a view reveals not only an anti-white agenda but a massive ignorance of American history and of European peoples. Students entering college today can usually write a paragraph or two about Sojourner Truth or Harriet Tubman but not a single line about the Cornish in America.

The mining camps of the Old West were almost always more than 90 percent white. The only significant numbers of nonwhites were Chinese, and even they rarely made up more than eight percent of a camp's population. Blacks were virtually nonexistent, usually constituting less than one percent of a camp's population. Still, the camps had great diversity. In Grass Valley, where the Cornish made up nearly 20 percent of the population, the Irish accounted for 22 percent. Although both were white and—even more—Celtic, they were very different. The Cornish were mostly Methodists, teetotalers, and Republicans. They were highly trained, experienced miners, staunchly anti-union, and worked for a percentage of the take. When the Civil War erupted, they considered it none of their affair. The Irish were mostly Catholics, heavy imbibers, and Democrats. They were unskilled laborers and inexperienced miners, fiercely pro-union, and worked for daily wages. When the Civil War erupted, they flocked to the colors.

Psychologists have argued that the Cornish and the Irish were "emotionally repressed." Having serious reservations about psychology in general and its use as an historical tool in particular, I would prefer to say that there was a general reluctance in the two peoples to express their feelings. Any similarity ends there. Cornishmen found release for pent-up emotions in song-filled and fervent Methodist services. Irishmen found release not in church but in drinking and fighting. My sister once told me that Irishmen can only, or dare only, express themselves emotionally when drunk. She was probably right.

The Cornish were the leaders of the temperance movement in the mining country. Temperance was a misnomer: The movement actually advocated total abstinence. The Irish were the owners and patrons of many of the numerous saloons that lined the main streets of the mining camps. Conflict between the Cornish and the Irish over drinking occurred in nearly every camp; bloody brawls erupted in Virginia City, Nevada, and Butte, Montana. Nearly as often, though, the conflict resulted in some good-natured fun. When a temperance crusader arrived in the mining camp of Bodie, California, the local hard drinkers packed the lecture hall to hear his speech. He excoriated Bodie's liquor dealers and saloonkeepers, many of whom were in the audience applauding him. The proprietor of the Bank Exchange Saloon, Joe McDermott, thought that "the lecture is good, possessed of argument and no man in Bodie could pass a more pleasant and edifying hour than by listening to it, but if they think they can deliver more temperance lecturers than I can sell whiskey, why just let them keep it up."

Nonetheless, the temperance crusaders in Bodie had some success. They got the county supervisors to enact a law prohibiting saloons from opening on Sundays. Just one month later, the district attorney announced that he was discontinuing prosecution for violation of the Sunday-closing law because large-scale violation had made the law impossible to enforce. The small but ephemeral victory was not by accident. A Methodist church was one of only two—the other was a Catholic church—built in Bodie. The Cornish clearly exercised a strong presence in the town.

While the Cornish have been erased from American history and from the consciousness of young Americans, the Pennsylvania Dutch have been reduced to obscurity. Asking my students to describe the Pennsylvania Dutch usually elicits, "I thought the Dutch were in New York." Explaining to them that "Dutch" was what everybody else in America called Germans leaves them perplexed. Somehow, they have missed what the rest of us learned, one way or another, when young. Germans were nicknamed "Dutch" Miller or "Dutch" somebody, and the tidy farm down the road was owned by a "tough, old Dutchman." From the 18th century on, American landowners were advised to lease an unproductive farm to a Dutchman because he would put the property back in shape. If you had been bad, you might get a "Dutch-uncle talk." Your big brother might give you a "Dutch rub." Has all this disappeared?

By the early 1700's, large numbers of Germans, mostly from the Palatinate in southwestern Germany, were arriving in Philadelphia. By the time of the American Revolution, they made up a third of Pennsylvania's population. Thousands of them settled in the Susquehanna Valley, its rolling hills and fertile bottomlands reminding them of their native land. Along the Susquehanna River and its tributaries, particularly Conestoga Creek, they laid out their farms. They grew tobacco along Conestoga Creek and rolled the leaves into cigars. Called "Conestogas," the cigars smoked well and were relatively inexpensive. They became enormously popular, so much so that "stogie" became synonymous with cigar.

Another kind of Conestoga, also developed by the Pennsylvania Dutch, was the Conestoga wagon. Built sturdily with a bowed bottom (something like the hull of a ship) to keep cargo from shifting during transit over rough terrain and covered by canvas stretched over iron supports, the Conestoga wagon was without rival. The wagon carried the pioneer westward, generation after generation, from one frontier to another.

Equally important—perhaps critical—to westward expansion was the Kentucky rifle. Developed by Pennsylvania Dutch gunsmiths, the rifle was used by frontiersmen for a hundred years. The gunsmiths lengthened the stubby barrel common to European weapons to four feet, for greater accuracy at long distances. They reduced the bore to less than a half-inch to in-

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crease range and conserve lead. They enlarged and strengthened the trigger guard to withstand rough handling. They increased the size of the sights to ensure good aim over greater distances on the frontier. They made the hickory ramrod and grease patch standard.

The result of all these innovations was the famed Kentucky rifle. Known at first as the Long rifle, the piece got its new name because of its vital service on the Kentucky frontier, that "dark and bloody ground." Wherever the frontiersman went in the trans-Appalachian West, he was not without his Kentucky. A good rifle and steady aim meant food on the table and protection from the Indians.

The rifle also made American frontiersmen valuable soldiers. When George Washington joined British Gen. Edward Braddock's expedition against the French at Fort Duquesne, Washington had 400 frontiersmen with him, all armed with their own Kentucky rifles. The French and their Indian allies surprised Braddock's force and inflicted heavy casualties on the musket-armed British. Washington's frontiersmen took cover behind trees and carefully aimed every shot, dropping one Indian after another, enabling the survivors of Braddock's ill-fated expedition to retreat. Later in the war, Pennsylvania frontiersmen used their Kentucky rifles to clear the way for British Gen. James Wolfe's successful assault on Quebec.

During the American Revolution, the British felt the sting of the long rifle. Col. William Thompson's battalion of Pennsylvania riflemen killed British troops with such great regularity and from such great distances that the British War Office declared, "The settlers from the backwoods of America used their hunting rifles with so much effect that the only rejoinder was to pit rifle against rifle; for this purpose Jägers were recruited on the Continent."

The Battle of King's Mountain in western North Carolina demonstrated what an American frontiersman could do with his Kentucky. The British held the high ground and thought that their musket fire and bayonet charges would rout the buckskin-clad mountain boys. Instead, American sharpshooters found their marks again and again, until 225 British soldiers were dead and another 163 wounded. The Americans suffered only 28 killed and 62 wounded.

Neither the British nor the Indians could stop the American frontiersman with his Kentucky rifle. Frontiersmen became so expert that, at 70 paces, they could "snuff the candle" by passing a ball through the candle's flame without hitting the wick or "drive the nail" by putting round after round on the nail's head. Some even dared to shoot cups of whiskey off each other's head. They practiced with their rifles from boyhood on. The rifle was a tool more common than the plow. The American language became filled with rifle-inspired colloquialisms—"a flash in the pan," "lock, stock, and barrel," "a straight shooter."

In addition to being America's finest gunsmiths, the Pennsylvania Dutch were also America's best farmers. They introduced or greatly refined several important farming techniques. They rotated crops, allowed fields to lie fallow, used manure for fertilizer, and brought their livestock into specially designed barns to protect them during winter months.

Despite all this and more, the Pennsylvania Dutch are, like the Cornish, ignored when "diversity" is considered today. Occasionally, we hear of the Amish, but only for their quaintness. Moreover, few seem to understand that the Amish were but one element of the religiously diverse Pennsylvania Dutch. There were also the Mennonites, Moravian Brethren, Hutterites, Baptist Dunkers, Schwenkfelders, Reformed, Lutherans, and Catholics. Most of these groups conducted their religious services in German until well into the 19th century. A few were still doing so on the eve of the Civil War. It is no accident that the first Bible published in the American colonies was printed in German and that the publisher was Christopher Sauer of Germantown, Pennsylvania.

Not only are whites now treated as a monolithic group, but they are regularly misnamed. The misnaming first arose in California and the Southwest. Since Mexicans successfully lobbied in the 1920's to be recorded in the census and under various laws as "white," it was technically wrong to speak of whites and Mexicans. It could be literally wrong as well. Some Mexicans are of pure Spanish (or other European) descent, and many others have only a small portion of Indian blood in them. This led some writers, by the 1960's, to begin using the term "Anglo" for non-Mexican whites. All of sudden, I became an Anglo! I found this particularly ironic, considering the differences of opinion my Gaelic ancestors had with the English. I had been called a lot of names in my time, but never an Anglo.

Today, in California and the Southwest, whites with non-Spanish surnames are Anglos. We now have German Anglos, Norwegian Anglos, French Anglos, Italian Anglos, Polish Anglos. The irony of it all, in an age when all peoples and cultures are supposed to be preserved, embraced, and honored, is stunning. An otherwise excellent book about the Lincoln County War in New Mexico that I reviewed some years ago referred to all non-Hispanic whites as "Anglos." The use of the term was especially jarring because most of the major players in the Lincoln County War were not Anglos but Scots and Irishmen.

The whites certainly did not consider themselves part of a monolithic group. When the Rev. Taylor Ealy, a Presbyterian minister, arrived in the town of Lincoln, Alex McSween, a Canadian Scot and former Presbyterian minister turned lawyer, welcomed him in his home. Ealy wrote to his superior that McSween was a noble man and that his rivals for power in Lincoln County—Murphy, Dolan, Riley, and Brady—"are a dirty set of Irish cut throats, and you know what their religion is." The U.S. Army had a different opinion. Three of the four served with distinction in the Indian wars and in the Civil War. The County Wexford-born Murphy and the County Cavan-born Brady each rose through the ranks from private to major.

The diversity of European peoples in America might again be recognized through an appeal to the Evil White Man theme dear to the hearts of the politically correct. The Cornish can once more gain prominence by being portrayed, through their mining activities, as the principal despoilers of a pristine wilderness. Equal consideration can be given to the Pennsylvania Dutch, who not only supplied the vehicle that carried the Indian-killing pioneer westward, but also created the weapon that made the Indian's demise inevitable. The possibilities are limitless.

The term "Anglo" might even fall into disuse if enough is made of all these so-called Anglos slinging pejoratives at each other, and occasionally killing each other, over ethnic and religious differences. Today, at California universities, separate graduation ceremonies are held for blacks and Latinos, featuring "traditional" music, language, food, and dress. Should the rest of us expect similar treatment? At my ceremony, I want the pipes, Gaelic, a kilt, whiskey, and a sword—especially the latter two. C

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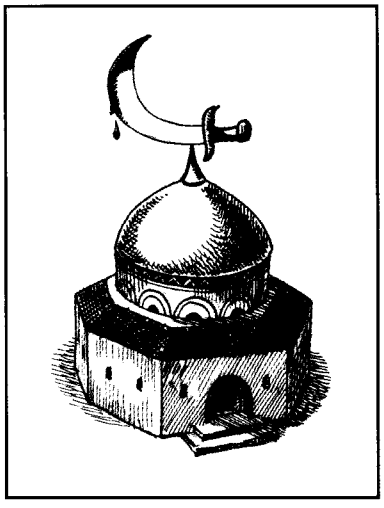
Empires of Faith

Islam and the Academy

by Philip Jenkins



Anatol Woolf

A story long popular in London tells of a foreign visitor losing his bearings while walking along Whitehall and politely asking a passerby, "Excuse me, sir, which side is the Foreign Office on?" Hearing the visitor's accent, the Brit despairingly replies, "Yours, probably." This story comes to mind when we read the histories of Western culture and civilization served up by many current academics, particularly in popular textbooks that are sold by the millions. Over the last generation or so, the one thing we can reasonably assume about these works, regardless of the exact topic or period under discussion, is that they are going to be on the other side. If an evil interpretation of Western conduct can possibly be applied to a given event, if a Western achievement can be distorted to expose the sinister and exploitative side of our civilization, then, without fail, it will be done. The story of ancient Greece thus becomes a heartrending saga of slavery and patriarchal brutality; the age of global discoveries is seen in terms of imperialism and genocide; Christian churches existed to demean women, suppress knowledge, and persecute their rivals.

Modern scholars have no wish to repeat the errors of their despised predecessors, who supposedly served as mindless cheerleaders for Western imperialism and oppression. No, indeed! Why do *that* when you can be a mindless cheerleader for the imperialism and oppression of every other civilization on the planet? Perhaps it is a perverse scholarly variant on Newton's law of motion: For every action, there is an opposite and wildly disproportionate reaction.

Though academics have turned venomously against Western Christian civilization, they certainly have not abandoned their willingness to make moral judgments, to present history in terms of heroes and villains. In many ways, contemporary liberal history looks very much like the most simplistic works of bygone days about the glories of civilization, but the civilizations that are now extolled are, basically, everyone except the West. This means the world of Islam, China, and even the Aztecs—perhaps the bloodiest and most ruthless bunch of thugs ever to be graced with the word "civilization." When we see how contemporary academics have turned so enthusiastically to any and all other societies, we might think of George Orwell's explanation of the extreme political ideologies of the 1930's. In Orwell's view, a generation of young people brought up on flag-waving jingoism had come to despise their own country, but they still felt a powerful compulsion to express their patriotic passions, and so they transferred their loyalties to more fashionable nations—to Soviet Russia or Nazi Germany.

To observe the process of transferred cultural patriotism in operation, we can trace how scholars over the years have treated the European Middle Ages. Once upon a time, the Middle Ages were seen as a magnificent peak of cultural achievement. This was the view epitomized by Henry Adams' *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904) and popularized in such Catholic bestsellers as James J. Walsh's *The Thirteenth, Greatest of Centuries* (1907). Clearly, a view that at once glorified the West and Christianity was going to be a prime target for liberal historians from the 1960's on. These skeptics made short work of naive romanticism about an age reputedly characterized by pervasive faith and heroic chivalry, a world of saints and scholars. If we look at a modern "Western Civ" textbook today, the Middle Ages are portrayed much differently. Instead of the old Eurocentric nonsense, the blaring triumphalism, we now know the truth: Medieval Europe was replete with superstition, class violence, and religious bigotry. Fortunately, though, Christian Europe was able to pull itself together through the aid of the great Muslim civilization, with its matchless saints and scholars,

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Philip Jenkins is the author, most recently, of Hidden Gospels: How the Quest for Jesus Lost Its Way *(Oxford University Press, 2001).*

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its heroic chivalry, and . . . you get the picture. Literally every one of the crudest stereotypes about medieval Christianity still flourishes, but it has been transferred *en masse* to Islam in the same period.

Beyond question, medieval Islam did possess a glorious civilization. Muslim scholars did a superb job of preserving classical writings, and they made significant progress in science and philosophy. I have no wish to denigrate Muslim achievements, past or present. Even now, entering a mosque can be a moving experience—all the more so when the building stands as an island of dignity and decency amidst a sea of extreme poverty. Islam itself is not the problem. Still, current Western views of the history of Islam are so over the top in their obsequious desire to praise Muslim achievements over Christian ones that they have simply become ludicrous. Just look at the bestselling religious books of Karen Armstrong and try to find a respectful word about Western or Christian thinkers in the Middle Ages, in contrast to the lavish praise heaped upon their Muslim counterparts.

This past May, PBS stations nationwide devoted three hours of prime time to a major documentary called *Empire of Faith*, which presented the current myth of Islam at its most extreme. This production, with actor Ben Kingsley as narrator, was trumpeted as one of PBS's leading events of the season.

At every point, the portrait of Islam offered by this program was staggeringly uncritical, although it featured commentary by a dozen or so leading academic historians—or perhaps I should say, *because* it featured so many eminent historians. Even the title is indicative of the slanted approach. Islam, we are told, was a "worldwide power founded simply on faith." Not surprisingly, the account of the religion's spread conveniently overlooks the fact that faith received a significant assist from a massive and consistent exercise of armed force. The whole "empire of faith" notion subtly, and improbably, suggests that millions of Christian Syrians, Egyptians, and others suddenly volunteered to become a despised underclass under Muslim rule. In fact, Christianity survived only because the Byzantines were sufficiently powerful and inventive to outfight the Muslims for several centuries, and because they possessed a potent secret weapon called "Greek fire" (we call it "napalm").

Once Muslim power was established, *Empire of Faith* tells us that, in effect, Islam created the modern world. Muslim women, we are told, had many more rights than the primitive Christians. But the greatest accomplishments were in the sciences. "Algebra, astronomy, trigonometry, and engineering" all trace their roots to Islamic scientists. "The Renaissance had its beginnings in Baghdad," and eventually, Muslims came "bringing the precious gift of knowledge to Europe." Of course, the 13th was the *Greatest of Centuries*—not that the scrofulous Christians had anything to do with it. By the way, it is amusing to see these paeans to science and scientific discovery, because they contrast so sharply with conventional academic discussions of Western advances, including scientism and the tainted desire to subdue the material world. Science and technology are *bad* if they are developed by Europeans or Americans; they are *good* if cultivated by anybody else.

The documentary depicted everything Christian or European with the greatest hostility. Much of the supposed European backwardness was connected with the people's primitive religion—namely, Christianity. Muslims were developing an admittedly sophisticated medical technology "at a time when Europeans were praying to the bones of saints to cure their illnesses." While Muslims were publishing learned works on paper (a Chinese invention), "the monks of the West were hoarding their knowledge on scraps of expensive parchment." The only true glories of Europe were to be found in Spain, in places like Cordova, "a city of light—a Muslim city!" Sometimes, visitors traveled from the "cold stone of their northern castles into the glorious Muslim cities of southern Spain." While Muslims were portrayed as living in urban sophistication, "in contrast, people in Paris lived in shacks by the river." (Rumor has it that the Islamic world was not entirely populated by wealthy lords and merchants living in the splendors of Club Muslim, but the program obviously did not have time to discuss the lower orders of that glorious society). One of the few media critiques of this particular piece of pro-Muslim fluff came from Claudia Rosett, writing in the *Wall Street Journal* (May 7). She wrote—accurately—that "This show bears a propaganda stamp akin to those old Soviet brochures once sent out by *Intourist*—the kind that were packed with pictures of colorfully costumed ethnic minorities and wide-angle photos of verdant fields but somehow went light on the grittier aspects of the situation."

Empire of Faith merits careful viewing, but one point that emerges repeatedly is the double standard. For the filmmakers, the ultimate evil of the Middle Ages was the Crusades, dubbed with terms like "a campaign of bloodshed," "a surge of religious fervor and fanaticism coming from Western Europe," "incomprehensible horror," where the warriors were "fired up with fanaticism and zeal." After we have shaken our head sufficiently over these atrocities, described to music that is alternately terrifying and dolorous, we are relieved to hear of the liberation of the Holy Land by Muslim warriors, fearless and brave, motivated by religious zeal (but *definitely* not by fanaticism or fervor). Modern historians love to illustrate the bigotry of medieval Christendom by quoting the line from *Chanson de Roland*: "*Les Chrestiens ont droit / et les paiens ont tort*," ("Christians are right, and pagans are wrong.") How simplistic and stupid, we scoff, when everyone knows that, in *Le Chanson de PBS*, it is *les paiens* who are infallibly correct. Or to paraphrase Orwell once more: Cross bad, crescent good.

What *Empire of Faith* has done—like countless texts over the last few years—is to take an image of the Middle Ages that would have been familiar in the age of Sir Walter Scott and precisely invert it. Knowledge and culture come from Islam to Europe, not the other way around, and the fanatical barbarians on the frontier are not the stereotyped Saracens, but the mindlessly savage Catholics. Twenty years ago, Edward Said popularized the term "Orientalism" to describe a familiar package of prejudices about the savage and mysterious East. What contemporary academics are doing is applying the same notions to Christendom and the West: They are, in fact, inventing "Occidentalism." And they are doing it without any significant criticism from the media. Since the West is self-evidently evil and repressive, its enemies must be laudable. To adapt the dialogue in my original story: Which side is PBS on? Anyone else's, probably.

This documentary could be dismissed as an isolated event, except that it epitomizes many contemporary ideas about both Christianity and Islam, particularly in the Middle Ages. In the conventional image, the two faiths differ above all in their attitudes toward religious tolerance. "Islam" implies Muslim-ruled Spain, a society in which Christians and Jews lived and interacted with some freedom; "medieval Christendom" suggests

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the massacres of Jews and heretics during the crusading era, and especially the great pogroms during the Black Death. Presumably, scientifically advanced Muslims did not need to find scapegoats for the plague. Christian Europe is equally condemned by its involvement in the Crusades, those acts of religious-based militarism that foreshadowed the worst brutalities of later imperialism. The contrast between the two religions is simply good and evil, night and day.

Unfortunately, the conventional image is also utterly wrong at every point. Certainly, some Muslim societies were tolerant, for the simple reason that, for most of the Middle Ages, they were ruling over vast Christian majorities (not minorities) and simply could not suppress or massacre all their subjects. Somebody had to pay taxes and build roads. In countries like Egypt, therefore, the new Muslim rulers contented themselves with persecuting the tens of thousands of monks and clergy. Each was required to have the name of his church or monastic house branded on his hand, and if he failed to do so, the hand would be cut off. Christian laymen generally escaped these torments until the 14th century, when, during the Black Death, Muslim authorities launched a wave of massacres and forced conversions on a vast scale. Yes, Muslims did launch pogroms, though commonly against Christians rather than Jews. According to the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, the number of Christians living in Asia fell from perhaps 21 million in 1200 to just 3.5 million by 1500. Generally, Islamic tolerance is an historical myth. Muslims were not monsters, but—contrary to legend—they did not rise above the prejudices of their age any more than their Christian contemporaries.

From the 14th century on, the fate of Christians living under Muslim rule is very much the same as that of Jews in medieval Europe. This parallel has continued into modern times, and for both minorities, the last century or so has been truly appalling. Though Christian communities survive across the region, their numbers are a pathetic shadow of what they were even in 1850, and entire peoples have been obliterated since that time. The Armenian genocide of 1915 is well known, but equally devastating were the massacres of tens of thousands of Lebanese and Syrian Christians in 1860. In 1915, the Ottoman Turks slaughtered and expelled hundreds of thousands of Christians of all sects, not just Armenians. A famine deliberately induced by the Turkish military claimed the lives of 100,000 Lebanese Maronite Christians. Across the Middle East, the bloodshed of 1915 destroyed ancient Christian cultures that had survived since Roman times—groups like the Jacobites, Nestorians, and Chaldaeans. And the carnage continued after World War I ended. Between 1919 and 1925, hundreds of thousands of Greek Christians were expelled *en masse* from the new Kemalist state of Turkey. As late as 1955, Istanbul's Christians suffered what William Dalrymple called "the worst race riot in Europe since *Kristallnacht*." Why do we never hear about such things? Do not expect them to form the subject of any future PBS documentary, with a title like *Empire of Blood* or *Forgotten Holocaust*. Such programs are about as improbable as studies publicizing the millennium-long Muslim hegemony over the African slave trade.

The long persistence of Christian communities under Islam challenges contemporary attitudes toward historical conflicts between the two faiths, particularly the monopoly of righteousness claimed by the defenders of Islam. In recent years, a powerful social movement has demanded that the West—specifically the churches—apologize for the Crusades. In this view, the Crusades represented aggression, pure and simple, against the Muslim world, and nobody can deny the resulting wars involved their share of atrocities. Underlying the movement for apology, though, is the assumption that religious frontiers are somehow carved in stone, and that the Muslim-ruled states of the Near East were destined to form part of the world of Islam. An equally good case can be made that the medieval Middle East was no more inevitably Muslim than other regions conquered by Islam and subsequently liberated, like Spain and Hungary. Should the West also apologize for those successful reconquests, or perhaps for failing to let Muslim forces roll over Austria and Germany? Curiously, Westerners do not suggest that Muslims apologize for the aggressive acts that gave them power over these various lands in the first place. If seizing Syria and Palestine by the Muslim sword was acceptable in the seventh century, it is difficult to see why reclaiming it with the Christian lance 400 years later was somehow a war crime equivalent to the holocaust.

I have suggested that liberal academics and opinion-makers sympathize with Islam partly because it is a leading historical rival of the Western civilization they hate. But there is something more to it than that, since the picture of Islam that emerges from recent writing looks suspiciously like the kind of history that liberals would like to have if they were to invent it afresh—which is, in fact, what they are doing. Just as Victorians created a romantic cult of the Christian Middle Ages as an intellectual refuge from the industrial society they loathed, so modern liberals are supplying themselves with a romanticized and sanitized Muslim past that substitutes for the authentic Western and Christian roots they have rejected. Accordingly, Islam is portrayed as everything that should have been: a glorious world of knights and castles blessed with a civilized, tolerant, and rational religion (a superior version of Unitarianism, perhaps); a sane mysticism, represented by the Sufis; sophisticated science and flourishing universities; and even signs of sexual equality. It sounds too good to be true—as, of course, it is. It is so inaccurate that, as time goes by, scholars will be forced to realize the gulf that separates their ideal Islam from the painful reality. At that point, tastes in invented history will shift once more, from Islam to some other civilization, preferably to one far enough away not to have too many embarrassing facts surrounding it (which is a leading reason why Tibet always appeals to Western dreamers). What we can say with confidence is that this quest for a usable past will not lead to a renewed taste for the Christian West. That society is too violent, too intolerant, too . . . *real*.

I began with the British Foreign Office, so let me end there. In the 1930's, a novice reporter assigned to the FO found, to his horror, that the daily press briefings were held at 6:00 P.M., but his newspaper had a deadline of 4:00 P.M. How could he possibly keep his readers informed of daily developments in foreign policy? Not to worry, chuckled the old hands from the press corps. In any given situation, just assume that the British government has decided to do the most craven and sickeningly dishonorable thing possible, and write your story as if that is the policy they have just announced. You will never go wrong. The same principle applies when we try to understand how Western academics study their own culture in relationship to others. Just assume that the fashionable interpretation of the day will be uncritically obsequious to all other cultures, while scoffing at Western or Christian achievements at every possible opportunity, and you will never be far off the mark. c

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Sic et Non?

Agreeing Not to Disagree

by Harold O.J. Brown

Anatol Woolf

A number of years ago, when I was teaching a ninth-grade religion class (in Switzerland, where religion is taught in public schools), one of the boys said to me, "All religions teach the same thing." Although only 15, he was, without knowing it, a witness for multiculturalism—not in the descriptive sense, in which one recognizes the existence of completing truth claims, but in the prescriptive sense, in which one says that all claims are equal, which, from the nature of things, means equally *invalid*. If a society professes Christianity, it can tolerate competing views, even while believing them to be false. A multicultural society tolerates every view *except* the one that professes to be true. All cultures are to be respected equally, with the likely exception of Western culture, which is not to be respected at all.

Let us turn back to the classroom situation: "So all religions teach the same thing—do you all believe that?" I asked. "Yes!" sang the chorus. Instead of arguing, I asked the boy to come forward and lie down on the long preparations table. (Religion, appropriately enough, was taught in a science classroom.) Then I proceeded—over the recumbent form of a somewhat distrustful 15-year-old—to describe the Aztec practice of sacrificing a victim, frequently a young lad like the one on the table, by cutting out his heart. The dripping heart was then offered to an idol, in accordance with the view that the gods required this "divine food" in order to keep the world in existence. The heartless body would then be rolled down the steps of the pyramid for use as food for animals and people.

"The God of Christianity," I then said, "also wants your hearts—not ripped out and given to an idol, but alive, in living bodies, to love and serve him. No difference?" By this time, the boy on the table had realized that nothing was going to happen to him, though he was still in shock. The class reacted with stunned silence, and I never heard that particular assertion again.

Of course, the difference between Aztec religion, with its bloody sacrifice, and Christianity (as well as the other "higher religions") is extreme; other religions are much closer, particularly (as C.S. Lewis showed in *The Abolition of Man*) with respect to the fundamental principles of morality. However, a religion does not have to prescribe human sacrifice to be categorically different from Christianity. Christianity acknowledges one eternal, omnipotent God; Hinduism professes belief in many gods and lesser deities; Buddhism acknowledges no god at all. Hinduism and Buddhism both teach that the material world is illusory and that the human spirit will be reincarnated many times. Christianity teaches that God created an objectively real world and holds that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). If either Hinduism or Buddhism is true, Christianity cannot be, and *vice versa*. The principle of religious tolerance holds that it is right for Christians to respect, for example, Hindus, while rejecting their doctrines—and *vice versa*, of course. Multiculturalism requires the adherents of each religion to accept the other as equally valid, which is to say that neither is objectively true.

The age of multiculturalism beckons us to enter it with joy, while asserting the essential equality of all human cultures. If religion is merely a product of culture, no religion can be objectively true; nor, for that reason, can it be superior to others. To assert multiculturalism is to deny the truth of any religion's claim to be objectively true. How can Western civilization, which has so long claimed to have its origins in an historical, supernatural revelation, so quickly accept multiculturalism without apparently realizing that, in so doing, it is cutting itself off entirely from its spiritual roots?

The late Italian Catholic thinker Augusto Del Noce has of-

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fered a helpful insight. Virtually every human society has some idea of transcendence, despite the obvious fact that there are vast differences among them. However, Del Noce argues in *The Epoch of Secularization*, transcendence no longer appears in the once-Christian West. It is not that it has been abolished; it is, rather, as though the culture as a whole has lost what R.L. Bruckberger called "a certain metaphysical organ" and is no longer capable of perceiving or thinking about the transcendent. We no longer see a conflict between Christian theism and atheism; atheism no longer exists, and Christianity has been reduced to a kind of club activity, like bridge, and does not engage in philosophical combat. (This is why the defense of naturalistic evolution has become such a frenzied concern of much of the intellectual world. If the merest suggestion of intelligent design is reasserted, then one has to ask the God question again, and that is precisely what we increasingly lack the mental equipment to do.)

Del Noce's analysis casts light on the situation that prevails in the West. Real atheism no longer exists, because in order to be atheistic—in order to deny that there is a God—one must first "think God." Otherwise, what is there is to deny? Atheism has been superseded by agnostic secularism, in which God does not even appear on the radar screen. Atheism usually requires an awareness of a religion that affirms a belief in God, or at least of the possibility of transcendence; otherwise, there is no idea of the God that one wishes to deny. How has this happened? Del Noce sees the cause in secularization. In contrast to the 19th century, when materialism was a philosophy which challenged theism and revealed religion on intellectual grounds, the 20th century, at least since World War II, has attacked Christianity, and with it the idea of transcendence. It has done so by flooding Europe and North America with wonderful things to buy, to have, and to do, causing the transcendent to recede from view. People do not bother to deny transcendence; they simply cannot really imagine it.

Eternity vanishes in the torrent of worldly goods, and with it moral judgments here and divine judgment hereafter. All transcendent values disappear; only commerce remains. Although Del Noce does not use this example, this is why internet pornography cannot be suppressed. If there is any commercial value in anything, no moral reservations can impede our access to it. (An illustration of the victory of commerce over tradition can be seen in the gradual suppression of the Confederate Battle Flag in states where it was once honored. The crisis came with an NAACP boycott of South Carolina, and the fear of losing income quickly persuaded South Carolinians to abandon the old flag.) This marginalization is why something as illogical as multiculturalism seems to be having a relatively easy march to triumph over all vestiges of particular cultural commitment, including religion.

If we return to the image of the boy on the table, it seems absolutely self-contradictory to assert the equality of all cultures when one is based on human sacrifice and others are based on the sanctity of human life. To accept multiculturalism as a valid principle is easier than to deny the validity of your own religion, but it quickly comes to mean the same thing. To call all cultures equal, and to designate religion as an aspect of culture, is to call all religions equal, which means, of course, that none is more valid than any other. Most postmodern thinkers, politically correct though they may be, do not believe that Aztec practices are no more objectionable than a Sunday-school picnic. Or do they? Some might find a Billy Graham crusade more objectionable than the sacrifices on the great pyramid of Tenochtitlan, because, after all, the sacrifices are long past and do not threaten us, while Dr. Graham's crusades frequently win people away from multiculturalism to the exclusivist religion called Christianity.

The impact of multiculturalism on the churches is visible everywhere, and not only in the more extreme variants of Christianity. We have heard of the re-imagining conferences, funded by leading mainline denominations, including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Methodist Church—both of which ought to know better. Jesus Christ is "re-imagined" as a female persona, Sophia, and His Supper is turned into a meal with milk and honey. The Pope himself allowed Buddhists to erect in St. Francis's church at Assisi what earlier Christians would have called an idol. Conservative Protestants seem increasingly culture-driven. Willow Creek Community Church's "seeker friendly" Sunday services hardly resemble traditional Protestant worship. Evangelical Protestants, in their zeal to reach the young, have created "Christian" versions of rock concerts. The authors of some theological curricula seem to be more interested in incorporating elements of popular culture than in impregnating students with Scripture and Christian tradition. A recent Harvard Divinity School catalog listed only one semester on the literature of the New Testament, but two semesters on feminist interpretation of the same. (To be fair to Harvard, there were some courses on individual New Testament books.)

The 19th century was the century of missionary expansion, and the 20th century began with even greater missionary enthusiasm. But today, Christian missions are in considerable disrepair in the mainline churches, including Roman Catholicism. The Roman Catholic Paulist order, founded in the 19th century with the goal of converting Protestants, now specializes in such things as publishing books on liberation theology.

Missiology, for many, is becoming anthropology, dedicating itself to the study of other religions rather than to changing them. Few will now sing the old missionary hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," with such multiculturally incorrect lines as: "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone." One may infer from this change that we now assume that earlier Christian missionaries, who really thought this way, were blind to the authenticity (another buzzword in modern multicultural religiosity) of what we used to call "paganism," but must now call "indigenous religion."

In the analysis of Augusto Del Noce, secularization drives out both true religion and atheism because it no longer thinks in terms of transcendence. Multiculturalism is the most devastating aspect of the secularization of culture. For Christians, it does not denounce their faith as vain by denying truth of the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:17). That would be a focused attack, and it could be countered with arguments from history as well as testimonies of faith. Instead, it tells them, in effect, "It is wrong to ask whether Christ is risen. That is only one among many religious and cultural convictions. To affirm that it is uniquely true is to be intolerant, and that is the one sin that multiculturalism cannot endure."

If multiculturalism continues to gain ground, there will be no need for religious war—real or figurative—because no one will believe that his religion is true. For adherents of some religions, that may not seem terrible, but Christians will have a hard time explaining it at the judgment seat. c

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The Whippoorwill

by J.O. Tate

"The pure products of America
go crazy."

—William Carlos Williams

Robert Mitchum:
"Baby, I Don't Care"
by Lee Server
New York: St. Martin's Press;
590 pp., $32.50

Anatol Woolf

The go-to-hell attitude, unique features, and deceptive talent by which we know Robert Mitchum (1917-1997) were the product of his heredity and experience. His father was a Scotch-Irish South Carolinian with some Amerindian blood—he died young in a railroad accident. His mother was Norwegian on both sides, a bohemian woman of imagination who bequeathed a love of poetry, literature, and music to her son. Mitchum's anarchic spirit was both inherited and taught by his environment: Bridgeport, Connecticut, Delaware, and New York City, where his older sister went into show biz at an early age. As a boy, Mitchum already wrote and raised hell, and read Jack London and Jim Tully.

At 14, he left home with his mother's blessing to discover the big world, riding the rails in Depression America, freezing and starving, scrounging and hustling, seeing men die, and winding up rather notoriously on a chain gang in Savannah, Georgia. Mitchum himself declared that everything in America that is not nailed down winds up in California, so he did, too. Marrying his childhood sweetheart and moving into a converted chicken coop, he worked with no aim in the early 1940's, until he found his calling in the theater. Soon, he was the unshaven heavy for Hopalong Cassidy, and before the war was over, he was a rising star in Hollywood. He was on his way, and the list of movies stretches for decades. If Mitchum never took Hollywood seriously, neither did he turn his back on the money, the chance to travel the world, nor the opportunity to exercise his considerable talents.

Mitchum was no mere movie actor. He achieved, as some others have done, an iconic status—he became a god, as Parker Tyler would have it, a celluloid immortal. When he was young, the publicists formed a club of the "Mitchum Droolettes," so great was his magnetism and their vulgarity. One bobby-soxer gushed, "He has the most immoral face I've ever seen!" (She meant that as praise, of course.) Mitchum more than survived the crisis of a marijuana bust and jail term in 1948—he came out of it with enhanced stature. The bad boy had to be bad, and the public liked him that way. Both the pot and the booze continued to be processed for a lifetime. Planting marijuana by his mailbox, Robert Mitchum showed an American spirit of defiance at odds with our national mythology, but not with our national character.

Robert Mitchum has today become his movies, save in the memories of family and friends. I suppose that there are two genres for which he is best remembered and America is known around the world; certain of those will remain of permanent interest. Because of the popularity of the Western when he began his career—as well as his own brawny nature—Mitchum made many Westerns. While most such films are bad, *Pursued* (1947) is distinctive as a *noir* Western—"lit by matches," as Mitchum liked to say—and will never be forgotten. *Blood on the Moon* (1948) is another jewel; *The Lusty Men* (1952) is the best rodeo movie ever made; and *Track of the Cat* (1954), *The Wonderful Country* (1959), and *El Dorado* (1967) are also superior works. Mitchum never looked silly in costume, and with his voice, inflections, and body language, he put his own brand on the horse opera, forever.

In another—and not unrelated—mode, Mitchum did more than make his mark. Martin Scorsese has declared, "Mitchum *was* film *noir*." And he was, from the get-go. Don Miller has called *When Strangers Marry* (1944) "the finest B film ever made." *Out of the Past* (1947) is an acknowledged masterpiece, thought by many to be the best *noir* of them all. At least three of Mitchum's RKO movies are still regularly screened

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by cinephiles. *Where Danger Lives* (1950) is prime *noir*. *His Kind of Woman* (1951), an extravagant pre-postmodern *noir* experiment, remains highly appealing today. (Ironing his money, Mitchum's character declares, "When I'm broke, I press my pants.") *Angel Face* (1952) is high on the list of *noirs*—it was one of Jean-Luc Godard's favorite American films. *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) is remarkable for many reasons. The only film directed by Charles Laughton, *Hunter*—which is American Gothic to the max—depends altogether on the riveting performance of Mitchum, in spite of its extravagant retro stylistics. No one who has seen Harry Powell, with L-O-V-E and H-A-T-E tattooed on his fingers, has ever forgotten this peak of Mitchumness. *Cape Fear* (1962) shares such a distinction: Max Cady—snide, insinuating, cunning, and as at home in dark water as an alligator—is a monster without a fright-wig in a film whose daunting ambivalence may be underestimated even today.

But having embodied the *noir* cycle for nearly two decades, Mitchum was more than prepared for neo-*noir*. *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* (1973) showed something of his range, as if we had not suspected the extent of it already. *Farewell, My Lovely* (1975) is a loving goodbye to the 40's, a superb retro-pastiche of the world that Raymond Chandler had imagined and that Mitchum, who had known Chandler, had both actually lived in and made "real" on film 30 years before. As the years went by, Mitchum was more and more an icon out of context, often wasted in dubious projects. He had a cameo in the disastrous remake of *Cape Fear* (1991), as Hollywood increasingly lost touch with itself. Toward the end, Mitchum appeared in a hip neo-Western called *Dead Man* (1995). In a way, that was fitting. He had become a totem, and looked it.

The particular reason for which I picked up Lee Server's biography was the same that had driven me through so many other books about Robert Mitchum. I wanted to know all I could find out about Mitchum's remarkable *Thunder Road* (1958), and I found Server's treatment quite satisfactory. I wanted to understand why I had remembered that movie so well for over four decades, something in which I was hardly alone. *Thunder Road* remains a cult classic today. When it was released, it was a hit that recycled across the South for years—a case of Hix Don't Nix Stix Pix—and Mitchum's recording of "The Ballad of Thunder Road" was twice a hit on the national charts. And to know *Thunder Road*, you have to know Mitchum, who wrote the story, wrote the songs, produced the film and starred in it, and hired his son James to play his brother. *Thunder Road* has been seen as a road movie, as a hillbilly movie, as the progenitor of many trashy drive-in movies and even of—God help us—*The Dukes of Hazzard*. But Mitchum's most personal film can be understood more productively in other ways.

Thunder Road is a thriller about a whiskey-runner, Luke Doolin, who is chased by the revenuers and muscled by the encroaching Mob. He oscillates between the Rillow Valley and his family and the nice girl who pursues him, and Memphis, where he delivers the goods and sees the chanteuse Francie (played by Keely Smith). His combative temperament is offset by his melancholy, because he knows he does not fit in with developments. He urges his brother to embrace a technical career, reserving the speed and the violence for himself. As he says, "Someday I've got to fall." The dynamite with which the goons destroy his car and his counterpart in a plot to destroy him is also the explosive that the feds use to blow up the stills. Paradoxically, the technological advancement that soups up his Fords will also render his people's way of life obsolete. Luke is doomed. His final crash was pirated as stock footage in *They Saved Hitler's Brain* (1963). *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

Fortified by rockabilly music, by Arthur Ripley's location shooting, by the locals who filled the movie with authentic presence and tones, and even by endearing continuity errors and other signs of cheap production values, *Thunder Road* is, I think, the greatest of B movies. John Belton, writing in 1976, saw *Thunder Road* as a personal work keyed to "the self destructive aspects of Mitchum's personality." In a brief comment in the shrewdest book on Mitchum before Server's, David Downing (1985) has grasped the structure of the film behind the thriller surface, the polarity between Rillow Valley and Memphis, between family and Francie. Seeing the film as "pervaded by melancholy," he also sees it as an allegory of its creator's ambivalences and frustrations: "Making movies has been Mitchum's *Thunder Road*."

The most instructive comments on *Thunder Road* that I have seen appear in J.W. Williamson's striking *Hillbillyland* (1995). Williamson's broad sweep helps him to view the film as the progenitor of many a Southern road movie—and not without reason. This very breadth, however, flattens out our sense of perspective, since *Thunder Road* towers over any other such film. Even so, Williamson understands that *Thunder Road* changed the view of the hillbilly as an "exotic" by treating the moonshining business from the inside—it shows the community precisely *as* a community, and never as eccentric or villainous. He knows, too, that "the movie . . . constructs a full-fledged tragedy and introduces a hero, Luke Doolin, who must die for his people."

Williamson identifies two symbols, placed there by Mitchum, that allow us read the film. The first is the pennant hanging on his bedroom wall: the "battle pennon of the 32nd Regiment, 7th Army Division," an explicit sign of Doolin's doom. As one of his father's peers, Jesse Penlon, says "He's got a machine gunner's attitude and death don't faze him much." Luke Doolin, alienated by experience from his community, cannot relent from his destructive and self-destructive course. The other symbol is "the ominous bird of freedom, the whippoorwill." Keely Smith as Francie sings Mitchum's song three times, and we are reminded that *The Whippoorwill* was the film's original title. Williamson goes so far as to point out, brilliantly, that when Doolin leaps from Carl Kogan's window onto a convenient dump truck loaded with sand, he flies like a free but doomed bird himself, one who cannot be manipulated by the music of Kogan's tape recorder. Here we must add that "The Ballad of Thunder Road" identifies Doolin as a "whippoorwill" in its second line. We may add that, when Luke first goes to see his daddy at the still and tells him about the death of Niles Penlon, his father replies about having heard a corpse-bird.

I am dissatisfied not so much with Williamson's treatment of *Thunder Road* as with his category, "hillbillies." Neither am I comfortable with the exclusive association of *Thunder Road* with junk like any number of road movies about good old boys. So how should *Thunder Road* be classified? I have two answers that I hope will renew appreciation for this oldie-but-goodie.

The first is to place the film in the cate-

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gory of film *noir*, which may seem either an obvious or a weak suggestion—but it is not a suggestion I have seen anywhere. *Thunder Road* is not listed in any book on *noir* I know, not even in Silver and Ward's encyclopedic account. But *noir* says something about Mitchum's imagination. After all, Mitchum was one of the stalwarts of film *noir*; add to that the vision of night, of darkness, of the day-for-night shots in *Thunder Road*, as well as the familiar association with violence, automobiles, crime, cops, and—above all—doom. The rustic setting is no problem, since there is so much urban business. Carl Kogan and his hoods would be right at home in a film *noir*—and so is the nightclub singer, Francie. Besides, *Moonrise* (1949) is a *noir* set in the rural South.

But another category suggests itself as well, and that is the "Southern"—so I call it in parallel with "Western." There is a lot to say about *Thunder Road* as a Southern movie—more than a movie set *in* the South, it's a movie *about* the South. We have the display of Southern accents and manners, folklore and music, values and culture. Williamson has noted much (though not all) of this, in Doolin's chivalric attitudes toward women, his respect for his parents, and solicitude for his brother. The scene in the tobacco barn, in which the men of the community discuss their options, is very effective, indeed one of the best depictions of humble democracy, of community in action, ever filmed. (Such a scene can be compared with similar ones in *Shane*.) The scene at church is authentic, as is the boredom of Robin Doolin and the absence of Luke.

More powerfully Southern, in a larger sense, is the evocation of dialectical opposition—social, economic, and otherwise. Because the South lagged behind in economic and social development, it has always been used as the ostensible topic or as a vehicle of dramatization, in *Swallow Barn* before the Civil War, and in *Gone With the Wind* long after. When the men discuss secession in the great opening scene of the novel and movie, Scarlett O'Hara is preoccupied with her manipulations. The contrast is effective throughout the story. Scarlett kills a Yankee, but she also, as a capitalist, becomes one. She gains wealth and loses the reason to have any. It is a universal story, not just a Southern one, though set firmly in Georgia. The dialectical vision is of two opposed economies and societies that, melded in war, create a synthesis in which the strong survive—at a cost. Marx would have understood. Hegel would have seen Scarlett as alienated not from her labor (or that of her father's slaves) but from herself. *Gone With the Wind*, misread to this day, shares something powerful with *Thunder Road*—which is known as "the *Gone With the Wind* of the drive-ins," as Server has noted.

Lucas Doolin is, like Scarlett O'Hara, a partly admirable but self-destructive protagonist. He exists within community, but deep down is not part of it, as his rivals ("cousins") and the women who love him know. Predisposed to violence and never backing down from a challenge, he has no future. The Southern background (here, the Cumberland country, Tennessee and Kentucky) is the scene of dialectical conflict because of the possibility of contrast. The bureaucratic T-men (or ATF agents, as we would say today) are as much the enemy as the urban crooks. Either way, whether through legal nicety and taxpaying, or through the illegal mob operation, the moonshining enterprise has no hope of maintaining its base, its innocence, or its liberty. Papa Doolin says otherwise: "We'll be back in business, brighteyed and bushytailed as ever." But today, in fact, moonshine does not cut much mustard. Marijuana is the surreptitious cash cow in the contemporary South.

Many familiar films show a dialectical background such as I have indicated, what Andrew Lytle has called, in reference to fiction, "the enveloping action." The sense of time passing and inevitable change haunts many a Western of quality. Indeed, the passing of the old order is the explicit topic of the most famous Westerns. *Shane* (1953) makes a suggestive comparison with *Thunder Road*. The dialectic is clear: The old cattle baron, Ryker, cannot long stand in the way of progress in the form of the homesteaders. The hired killer Wilson forces the gunfighter Shane to return to his violent ways, which he does out of love for the Starrett family. The scene in Grafton's general store is suggestive of economic development and nostalgia as well: The homesteaders gawk at the catalogue, and Shane is shocked by the price of store-bought clothes. He regresses to his old buckskins as he discusses with Ryker the obsolescence of their respective ways of life: "The difference is, I know it."

Thunder Road has a similar sense of social and economic conflict. Luke Doolin is a darker character, however, than Shane, who seems a paladin out of a romance. But the affinity with *Shane* and other such Westerns, I think, shows something of the stature of *Thunder Road* as more than a *noir* melodrama. It is a Southern-situated treatment of the ongoing crisis of modernization, which is the great topic of our consideration in the media of discourse, from Defoe to Tolstoy to Margaret Mitchell—and to Robert Mitchum, whom I have wanted to thank since 1958. Better too late than never.

I thank Lee Server as well. *Robert Mitchum* is not only the best book about Mitchum and his movies—it is also the best book I have ever seen about Hollywood. I think its distinctions are twofold. First, it takes us as close as possible to the personality of an enigmatic man, and shows us, past the barroom brawls and bad-boy antics, a man who was gifted, sensitive, and even sweet. Server shows us how Mitchum was impaled on the horns of a dilemma. A natural rebel, he was trapped by the need to become part of the system in order to afford his distance from it. Robert Mitchum's sense of absurdity, earned the hard way, was bound to be stimulated to unendurable exasperation in La-La Land. Whatever Mitchum was, he was not a phony, and reading about him can be a great pleasure. He was hard to know but easy to enjoy. When George Peppard asked him if he had ever studied the Stanislavsky Method, Mitchum replied, "No, but I've studied the Smirnoff Method."

The other distinction of Server's *Mitchum*, I think, is its nuanced precision in defining the moment and the value of so many films. The directors and their idiosyncrasies, the cinematographers, the other actors, the exact social and political contexts of a given situation—it is all there and almost always spot on. There are a few passages where Server assumes the leftist interpretation of the anticommunist episode, but that has long been routine. Otherwise, Lee Server has excelled in rendering the personality and the career that we know from 54 years before the camera. He has shown us the Mitchum who was crazy—like a fox. Defiant to the end, Mitchum was on oxygen as his lungs failed him and cancer destroyed him. Of the oxygen, he said, "I only need it to breathe." The last thing he did was smoke an unfiltered Pall Mall—before he flew on to the only real freedom there is.

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The Truce Is Over

by Clyde Wilson

The Long Truce: How Toleration Made the World Safe for Power and Profit
by A.J. Conyers
Dallas: Spence Publishing Company; 266 pp., $27.95

◆

Toleration in public life, the agreement to disagree peaceably, is one of the great achievements of Western man. Toleration can sometimes be found in static societies, but in dynamic societies, it is rare—save for a few recent centuries of European civilization.

The disaster of the 17th-century religious wars and—even more, perhaps—the discovery of the practical benefits of an empirical attitude toward truth generated a certain openness, a willingness to live and let live in matters of faith. Nonetheless, the happy era of toleration ended in the unprecedented totalitarian regimes of the century just past. And in the century now beginning, the so-called liberal democracies seem to be descending into the enforced groupthink that has been labeled "political correctness."

Dr. Conyers, a professor at the Baylor University Theological Seminary, wants to know how we got from there to here. His account is an erudite but readable tour of political thought from Hobbes to the present. To oversimplify a very nuanced argument, Dr. Conyers shows how toleration became, in the modern nation-state, essentially an indifference to all values except political power and material prosperity.

Far from liberating the individual from government, toleration liberated the individual from every bond and obligation except the state—a state now without any values except its own will to power. The loosened individual has become not a free man but a cipher in an inarticulate mass society, which has so far remained livable only by virtue of residues of its civilizational founding and Christian patrimony. "Liberation" becomes the pretty mask to hide elitist power. Emerson perfectly expressed it in the poisonous deceit of his Harvard Divinity School address: "Build therefore your own world, a correspondent revolution in things will attend the spirit. So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, snakes, pests, madhouses, prisons vanish . . . until evil is no more seen."

"To learn where we have begun to drift off course is not to regret the entire journey," writes Dr. Conyers. "Distance, nevertheless, gives us perspective." There is a fundamental question raised by the course of modernity, he argues: How long can society maintain itself on residues? "How long can it pretend that the character and virtue of a people, that which makes social life commodious and predictable, can simply be taken for granted?" Will we continue on the perilous path of "a form of toleration that, in effect, tolerates nothing except the individual and the state, giving free reign to the egotistical forces at either end of the spectrum?"

I have summarized a work that deserves thoughtful and extended reading and that is as relevant to our moment as the sunrise. *The Long Truce* goes on my best shelf with other valued friends of contemplation—Richard M. Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences*, Betrand de Jouvenel's *On Power*, Donald Livingston's *Philosophical Melancholy and Delerium*, and Eric Voegelin's *New Science of Politics*.

Clyde Wilson teaches history at the University of South Carolina.

Waking Up to Dumbing Down

by Derek Turner

Dumbing Down: Culture, Politics, and the Mass Media
edited by Ivo Mosley
Bowling Green: Imprint Academic; 328 pp., $19.95

◆

Chronicles readers may be rather tired of hearing about "dumbing down," but the ugly term is just now starting to attain cliché status in Britain. Conservative newspapers like the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail* have begun to talk about dumbing down recently, in reporting, for example, that almost 200,000 children entering British secondary schools (11- and 12-year-olds) could not spell "difficult" and that almost one in ten believed that Victoria was the queen who so resolutely opposed the Spanish Armada.

Newspapers on the left, such as the *Guardian*, also use the term, though usually to deny that the phenomenon exists. But while it is certainly possible to overreact to dumbing down, or to use the phrase as a mask for intellectual and social snobbery, the evidence that ideologically motivated or incompetent teaching has, in the words of the *quondam* head of the United Kingdom's Office for Standards in Education, "betrayed a generation" is simply overwhelming. And, of course, the phenomenon is not confined to schools, but affects virtually every aspect of life in Britain.

While dumbing down is attributable to several factors, the most important cause is the decline of "high culture"; to use the term today identifies you as an eccentric, snob, or even a dangerous reactionary. Nowadays, large numbers of people (at least in the media, the arts, and the universities) seem prepared to accept that watching football is as "valid" as watching Shakespeare, and that the Millennium Dome had its good points.

The middle- and upper-class people who administer arts ensembles and join local symphony orchestras are losing their self-confidence as "anti-elitism," political correctness, and commercialism creep into every corner of cultural life. Even their Received Pronunciation accent is starting to vanish, as they try to fit into Tony Blair's "People's Britain." Blair himself drops his aitches, and in a recent interview said that he had met one of his "mates" the other day. (He did not acquire these election-winning phonations at his elite private school.)

Echoes of the old suburban self-assurance can still be heard at the meetings of such bodies as the Royal Institution or on BBC Radio 3. But such organizations are ever fewer and more embattled, fighting a continual rearguard action against diminishing audiences—which trend they try to buck by introducing more "relevant" programs, outraging the faithful without making many converts. High culture is now held in such low esteem that few even among the newly rich bother sending their children off to the conservatory or to Paris. On the contrary, prime ministers now pretend to be interested in soap-opera characters and football. The drab "classless society" sought

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by John Major (who wanted to equalize everyone downward, to assuage his own feelings of social ineptitude) is close at hand.

Dumbing down is also helped along by egalitarian politicians and cultural *prominenti* seeking to open up cultural life to the "socially excluded" (another contemporary cliché, normally used to describe potential clients or voters). According to these people, the humanities, the arts, and politics are unjustly under the control of unrepresentative elites. These elites, they allege, have so structured their respective fiefdoms that it is extremely difficult for sexual, economic, or racial outsiders to penetrate into the charmed circles they presently control. Forcibly opening these fields to others, they argue, will help to ensure equality of outcome and, thus, eternal bliss (cue ambient music and heartwarming *Watchtower* pictures).

These days, the evil elitists are invariably members of the "white middle classes," whose dominance in the arts was decried by "Gerry" Robinson, Labour's appointee as chairman of the Arts Council. ("Gerry," like "Tony," is yet another sign of New Labour's false *bonhomie*, itself an aspect of dumbing down.) Reduce everything to its essentials, demystify everything, replace the old administrators or intelligentsia with new ones, and everyone will participate in cultural life on equal terms (or so the argument goes). "Social exclusion" will be a thing of the past, as will that blackest of modern evils, "institutional racism."

The great problem with this pleasant theory is that not everything *can* be simplified. Complex ideas are complex ideas, however you dress them up (or down). Learning certain things *should* require mental application, as Alexander Pope's cautionary words remind us. Furthermore, loose talk about "exclusion" and selfish elites breeds division. Many people will never have any interest in going to museums or symphony concerts—however "accessible" something is made to seem, or however many cheap tickets are made available. (Accessibility and cheap tickets are, of course, very different things. After the Royal Opera House's £45-million refurbishment, designed to make it less "exclusive," the cheapest seats actually became *more* expensive.) So why not let these people be? And why force those who *are* interested to subsidize those who are not?

It is also undeniable that the created illusion of everything being universally comprehensible and attainable makes everything feel somehow cheap and tawdry. As Rivarol said, "It is the dim haze of mystery that lends enchantment to pursuit." This mania for mediocrity was seen in an exaggerated form at the opening of the Dundee Museum of Modern Art, whose first resident artist worked under the condition that the public would be able to watch him at work and make suggestions about his paintings. Behind the craze for easy comprehensibility is sometimes the ignorance of the governing class itself. For example, an early Labour administrative reform was to rename the Department of National Heritage the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport—the choice of words revealing that the government views sport and cultural activities as being of equal dignity and importance. The present head of this department, "Chris" Smith, has stated that there is no qualitative difference between Keats and Bob Dylan.

Removing one unrepresentative appointee means that an immediate need arises for his replacement—a new appointment! Like the renaming of the Department of National Heritage, the government's laughable, short-lived plan to withhold funding from museums that failed to attract an appropriate quota of black visitors was intended as a means of melting down cultural homogeneity—real or perceived. The results of this generalized discrimination against intellectual endeavor, inventiveness, and individualism are plain to see—except to *Guardian* columnists and Tony Blair.

Dumbing Down is an anthology of 29 essays from an eclectic range of authors, from deceased conservative philosophers and sitarist Ravi Shankar to a left-wing Labour MP. It is one of those annoying books that makes you realize how much there is that you still have not read—and probably never will. But then, that is all the more reason to be grateful to editor Ivo Mosley for bringing such neglected, important writings to our attention.

Mosley's own writing displays occasional inelegancies (e.g., "we may be doubly stitched up"). But he is a bold and original thinker who combines Green politics not with the usual politically correct neuroses but with an awareness of how "the abolition of traditions and therefore the past" and "the creation of a new and ersatz national identity" act to unsettle people. His familial connections—he is Sir Oswald's grandson—are a cause of some embarrassment to him, but he does not make the mistake of trying to overcompensate (although he does describe jazz and Motown music as "a new form of high culture from one of the Earth's most disadvantaged nations: Black America"). And he notes the central paradox of dumbing down: the double standards of the left-wing elite who

> [pretend] in public to believe that the people are the source of all wisdom; but among themselves . . . say the people do not know what is best for themselves and need to have their interests interpreted for them.

That simplifying things in order that the masses can understand them is fundamentally patronizing and elitist in itself seems to escape both the patronizers and the patronized.

There are weaknesses in this volume, of course. The aforementioned Labour MP deplores that government by soundbite has replaced the civilized "government by conversation" characteristic of earlier Westminster eras. Naturally, he seems never to have considered how his own brand of politics has helped to oust the public-school elite who made the old system work because they were cut from the same cloth and understood each other intuitively. (Ironically, he is himself an Old Etonian.) His essay would have been more interesting had he examined how politicians play to the gallery, dumbing down politics by reducing complex issues to slogans like "Save the NHS." His essay, the defense of soundbites by Adam Boulton, and Redmond Mullin's call for state funding of voluntary bodies are the least convincing contributions to this collection. Roger Deakin's piece about the National Lottery seems a little over the top: "The Lottery . . . is a patronizing wheeze, premised on immoderate greed." (I write as someone who would not dream of buying a lottery ticket.) Helen Oppenheimer's piece on truth-telling seems slightly out of place, although she and Mosley would doubtlessly argue that moral relativism is an essential ingredient of dumbing down. Demelza Spargo insists, quite correctly, that we can only revive society by living more modestly, in greater harmony with nature—but again, the essay does not necessarily belong with the others. So much is packed into this book, finally, that it becomes a little disorienting. Although there are hardly any typos, no biographical details are provided for one of the authors.

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But such hiccups are more than compensated for by the wealth of good things the volume contains. There are classic pieces by Michael Oakeshott ("The Masses in Representative Democracy"), Michael Polanyi ("The Eclipse of Thought"), and Cyril Darlington ("The Impact of Man Upon Nature"), and less well-known reprints that certainly merit resuscitation. A good example is Philip Rieff's 1983 article on "The Impossible Culture," which uses the trial of Oscar Wilde to launch a fascinating discussion about how Wilde's grungier, less witty successors are still striving to create a society both "socialist" (by which Wilde meant universally rich) and "free" (by which he meant universally expressive).

There are also many excellent new essays, notably those by Anne Glyn-Jones on sensationalism in entertainment, which includes an interesting mini-history of classical theater, and Mark Ryan's "Turning on the Audience," to which I am indebted for the Dundee anecdote above. Robert Brustein, theatre critic of the *New Republic*, attempts to chart a way forward for culture-bearers, between a left which is "mired in sentiment or paralysed with guilt" and the traditionalist right, whose "moral correctness" can likewise stifle high art, and he wonders gloomily if Tocqueville was correct in his supposition that high art and democracy are incompatible. Claire Fox, former publisher of *Living Marxism*, claims that the massive expansion of university education that began under Margaret Thatcher has not been thought through properly. (Blair has said that he wants half of all Britons to obtain university degrees, but he is unwilling to back up his fine words with more money—nor are the degrees as worth having as they used to be, since top universities are now "encouraged" to select applicants by postal code instead of ability.)

MOVING?

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Finance writer Dominic Hobson deplores today's prevailing ideology, which is more concerned with efficiency and novelty than with *passé* concepts like liberty or the national interest. From this economically reductionist market perspective, he says, most dumbing-down initiatives flow. But Hobson takes an optimistic long-term view, applauding those who operate within the ever-growing "black economy" and insisting that it will allow more and more people to escape from the bureaucrats and extortionists of central government.

And so *Dumbing Down* proceeds—page after page of wise insights, acerbic observations, and (mostly) demonstrable propositions, impelled by a keen sense of indignation about what is happening to our civilization and to human beings more generally. As a primer on the phenomenon of meretricious repackaging and the commodification of life, it is likely to rule unchallenged for a long time to come.

Derek Turner is the editor of Right Now!, *published in London.*

Missed Opportunities

by the Rev. Msgr. Stephen M. DiGiovanni, H.E.D.

The Defamation of Pius XII
by Ralph McInerny
South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press;
211 pp., $19.00

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The Defamation of Pius XII recounts the heroic efforts of Pope Pius XII and members of the European Catholic hierarchy, clergy, religious, and laity to save hundreds of thousands of Jews from Hitler's "final solution." Pius XII began this work before the outbreak of World War II and continued it throughout the war years. It was part of a larger program, initiated by Pope Pius XI, to safeguard the dignity of the human person from "the usurpation of every human and divine right" (*New York Times*, October 30, 1939) by the totalitarian states of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin.

The Pope's words form part of the foundation for similar efforts made by the present pontiff against world government and global business. The Catholic Church alone, as Albert Einstein wrote in 1940, repeatedly protested against the policies and actions of the Third Reich. Following the war, the entire world praised Pius XII and the Church for the sacrifices made to save, by some estimates, nearly one million Jews from the death camps.

Ralph McInerny's thesis is that the present-day false accusations against Pius XII are really attacks against the Catholic Church, and a compelling case can be made for this argument. Stalin tried identical tactics immediately after the war, as he worked for control of Eastern Europe. The logic then, as it is now, was to raise questions in the minds of the faithful: If the Roman Catholic Church had a hand in the horrors brought on by Hitler, how could it be trusted today? The Catholic Church was the sole obstacle to Stalin's aggression in Eastern Europe. Speaking through *Izvestia*, Stalin employed the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church to point accusatory fingers at the Pope, charging him with everything from beginning the war and cooperating with Hitler to plotting the takeover of the world. Everyone, including the *New York Times*, knew the charges to be rubbish (*New York Times*, April 17, 1945). The first published mention of the false charge that the Pope had been silent about the "final solution" was made after his death in 1958, when the communist paper *L'Humanite* wrote that the Pope should be criticized "for not having taken a stand against the Nazi concentration camps during the war." Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy*, written in the early 1960's, gave the false accusations a worldwide airing. Today, the media attack the Church by attacking Pius XII in accordance with the same logic: undermine the Church's credibility by accusing it of complicity in horrific crimes against humanity during World War II, as well as of participation in the mythological atrocities of the Crusades, the conquest of the Americas, and every other politically incorrect event in Western history.

Dr. McInerny's book presents the conclusions made by other authors about Pius XII. He quotes my work on Pius XII as reported by the *New York Times*, but without crediting it. He uses no primary historical texts, principally relying instead on quotations and research from other

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books, such as *Pius XII and the Second World War* by Pierre Blet, S.J., and *The Last Three Popes and the Jews* by Pinchas Lapide. He has done little (if any) original work or real synthesis, and his book is too hurriedly composed to be considered scholarship. *The Defamation of Pius XII* is similar in style to a fundamentalist Christian pamphlet, decrying in shrill terms the fallacies put forth by the enemy camp. His facts are correct, but his style and approach are disconcerting.

I wish that Dr. McInerny had presented his argument in a more balanced and scholarly fashion, while using some primary texts to defend the only man who stood up to both Hitler and Stalin.

Msgr. Stephen M. DiGiovanni holds a doctorate in ecclesiastical history from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and is the author, most recently, of Pius XII and the Jews: The War Years, as Reported by the New York Times, *which can be found at* www.CatholicLeague.org.

Radical Voyages

by Myles Kantor

Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left, and the Leftover Left
by Ronald Radosh
San Francisco: Encounter Press; 216 pp., $24.95

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"Our ideas had consequences," observes Ronald Radosh, distinguished historian of the American left, echoing the quite un-radical Richard Weaver. The party of which Radosh was a member for most of his life conventionally is portrayed as an idealistic band in pursuit of a more humane America. Yes, its apologists admit, the left has erred from time to time—not from any intrinsic malice, but in the flawed execution of a noble creed. If, however, the author of *Commies* proves nothing else, he demonstrates that the left has always been a systematically illiberal campaign of subversion, operating in concert with the world's most rogue regimes.

Radosh's radical *bona fides* are impeccable. Of leftist parentage and related to the anarchist Jacob Abrams (of *Abrams* v. *United States* notoriety), Radosh was reared as a Red Diaper Baby in the *de facto* Soviet colony of New York City. At one point, he lived in the same building as "the notorious Soviet atom-bomb spy" Ted Hall. "My block, West 172nd Street and Fort Washington Avenue," he writes, "was also a stronghold of numerous other Communists." Radosh experienced his indoctrination in the radical agenda in both recreational and pedagogical settings. At Camp Woodland in Phoenicia, New York, where he sang Maoist anthems, a pair of Greek communists recruited him for the Labor Youth League (a branch of the Communist Party). For commencement speaker at Elisabeth Irwin High School (the "Little Red Schoolhouse"), Radosh's class chose W.E.B. Du Bois, an apologist for Stalin.

The Labor Youth League furnished "a ready-made community" of radicals at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Radosh thrived among his collegiate comrades, infiltrating campus organizations and doing battle against Madison residents. Khrushchev's 1956 disclosure of Stalin's atrocities did not weaken his commitment to the cause. Indeed, so intense was Radosh's radical faith that he joined the Communist Party *after* the Soviet Union invaded Hungary. (Radosh returned to Madison to pursue his doctoral studies with eminent revisionist historian William Appleman Williams.)

Ascent to the upper echelon, if not the vanguard, of the New Left followed. Among other significant experiences, Radosh took a podium by force at an anti-war rally, joined Michael Harrington to visit Michael Manley in Jamaica, and disquieted Tom Hayden with a critical review of *The American Future*. He was also a cofounder of *Studies on the Left* and later served on the editorial board of *Dissent*. In this latter capacity, he "became deeply involved in setting the tone for the nation's major democratic-socialist intellectual journal."

Radosh's eventual disillusionment began on a trip to Cuba in the early 1970's. For leftists, Cuba generally and Fidel Castro in particular were the incarnation of their vision: "He was the first true New Left revolutionary, a man who would not compromise, a man who promised and would build a humanist revolution that would be truly democratic—not Red; not Red, White, and Blue; but guerrilla green." What Radosh encountered, however, failed to confirm his preconceptions of the Cuban paradise: psychiatric abuse including mass lobotomies, prevalent penury, totalitarian puritanism—in short, the Procrustean obscenity of an omnipotent regime. When he criticized these conditions during his stay and in a subsequent article, Radosh's comrades excoriated his deviation from the herd. As one of them explained, "We have to understand that there are differences between capitalist lobotomies and socialist lobotomies."

Becoming convinced of Julius Rosenberg's guilt demolished another, more personal, sacred cow. "In my youth," Radosh observes, "the passion of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg was the great cause that wedded me to the Left." He was a participant in pro-Rosenberg rallies as an adolescent and shared an *alma mater* (Elisabeth Irwin) with their sons. Thus, Radosh leapt at the opportunity to vindicate the Rosenbergs when their sons established the National Committee to Re-Open the Rosenberg Case. In fact, this exculpatory purpose paved the way to his conclusion that Julius Rosenberg committed espionage. The left's vitriolic reception of *The Rosenberg File* (coauthored with Joyce Milton) prompted a watershed introspection: "Although I didn't want to be excommunicated from the church of the Left where I had worshipped all of my life, I had in fact started to question the whole project of the Left."

A second disillusionment abroad completed the destruction of his faith. Daniel Ortega and the Sandinista revolution were the radical toast of the 1980's, much as Castro and the Cuban revolution had been in preceding decades. The left mistook the displacement of an authoritarian regime—Fulgencio Batista's in Cuba, Anastasio Somoza's in Nicaragua—as the coming of free governance. But Radosh became increasingly averse to Somoza's successors on his trips to Nicaragua. Bianca Jagger apprised him of the new regime's expropriations, and Daniel Ortega defended the *turbas divinas* ("divine mobs") deployed to suppress dissidents, while witnessing Nicaraguan peasants in refugee camps convinced Radosh that "Sandinista power in Nicaragua had to be ended." Radosh bade an implicit farewell to his former comrades and their willful blindness in an essay written after Ortega's 1990 electoral defeat, an event that brought his "long exile from America" to a close.

Radosh's account of his radical voyages maintains a quiet profundity and

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good-humored decency. For those seeking to understand the contemporary left in all of its fanaticism, *Commies* is indispensable.

Myles Kantor is editor of www.Free-Emigration.com *and a columnist for* Front Page Magazine.

Hapless Meals

by Katherine Dalton

Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal
by Eric Schlosser
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company; 356 pp., $25.00

A few years ago, an old friend of my husband watched her three-year-old son die after eating a tainted hamburger at a fast-food chain in Oregon. She is a pediatrician, and her son had good care; but there was simply nothing anyone could do for him.

He was one of many Americans who become sick from what they eat. According to a 1999 study by the Centers for Disease Control, 200,000 people are sickened by food daily, 900 are hospitalized, and 14 die. That amounts to a quarter of the American population over a year's time. Most of these poisonings are not deadly, but there is enough *E. coli* 0157:H7 (the toxic strain responsible for the Jack in the Box deaths out West in 1993, among many others) floating around for concern.

The problem, simply put, is caused by manure in your meat, and I do mean *yours*: A 1996 USDA study found that over 78 percent of the ground beef sampled contained microbes that are spread generally by fecal material. Yet the U.S. government, which can recall consumer products ranging from toys to automobiles, does not have the legal power to recall tainted meat, or even to release information to the public about where that meat is being sold (unless under a brand name at a retail outlet, but not at a fast-food restaurant). Nor can it impose punitive fines. The recalls you have heard about have been limited, voluntary, and often late, after much of the poisoned meat had already been consumed.

Eric Schlosser, in a chapter describing his unauthorized visit to a High Plains slaughterhouse, explains how our ground beef becomes so dirty. An ever-changing crew of Mexican and Latin American workers, many of them with little English or education, work disassembly lines that may process up to 400 cattle an hour. The speed of the lines is such that they can require a worker to make six cuts a minute on a full-sized cow. (Anyone who has cut up a chicken knows ten seconds isn't much time to separate bone from bone.) Speed, plus the lack of emphasis on cleanliness and the common occurrence that a cow stomach or bowel is pierced and sprays the meat; the ill health of many feedlot cattle, which are packed so closely into the lots that they foul eat other with their waste; the incredible truth that a single hamburger can contain meat from dozens or sometimes hundreds of cows—all of this makes it remarkable that *any* American hamburger is untainted.

Fast food is cheap; it is convenient; it is quintessentially American; and it has become an American staple—so much so that a quarter of the country eats it on any given day. Yet fast food is, along with television, one of the great leveling evils of modern life. The very sameness, immediate availability, and ostensible "quality" that has made McDonald's so successful has also helped to make all American cities look alike. The franchising system McDonald's perfected has been imitated by so many other kinds of restaurants and businesses that it is now a political statement (and sometimes an inconvenience) to shop at a locally owned store or eatery.

To be truly pro-American beef you must be pro-American beef farmer, but cattle, potatoes, and many other farm products have a concentration of sellers now (Schlosser argues) that is reminiscent of affairs before the Sherman Act was passed to bust up the beef trust. A potato farmer earns about two cents on a $1.50 order of fries, and it wasn't so long ago that pig farmers were selling at a loss while pork prices at the supermarket remained stable. It's no use saying that only the invisible hand of consumer demand has brought us to this point; as Schlosser and many others document, our own government promotes consolidation and mega-franchising. Once consolidated, large organizations of any kind can largely shape their market and supplier base. However you may feel about trustbusters and government regulation, what chance does a family business have against a multimillion-dollar corporation—let alone a cartel?

Schlosser packs much detail into a highly readable and convincing narrative that touches on the many aspects of a "fast-food nation," from the high injury rates among meatpackers to the alchemy of the flavoring industry to the pervasive influence of cheapness-at-any-cost on the culture of an entire country—and now, the world. The book also contains a number of piquant asides: how, in the 1920's, General Motors secretly bought up many city trolley systems, dismantled them, and turned the companies into bus lines with GM-manufactured buses; how the character of Ronald McDonald was created in 1963 by Willard Scott, later of *Today* show fame, who was soon deemed too portly to play the part.

But among the answers Schlosser proposes to the problems he so effectively describes, the only one that seems to offer hope, or any immediate protection, is a change in how we spend. Jack in the Box now offers (Schlosser says) clean meat, having forced its suppliers, after the 1993 poisonings, to test their meat rigorously for microbes; only a similar p.r. disaster could prompt McDonald's or Burger King to do the same. Who wants to eat a hamburger there in the meantime? Or to buy supermarket beef while waiting for OSHA to hire a reasonable number of inspectors? In any case, 50 United States may simply be too many to allow for any national regulatory solution. We are left with only the much less convenient solution of *slow* food: buying meat from a farmer or rancher or local butcher we know, or can get to know—one who has inspected his processor—and cooking the meat ourselves.

That is, these days, a very un-American answer, and I have little hope it will be widely adopted. Nor is McDonald's concerned. Earlier this year, one of its spokesmen replied by fax to a *New York Times* reporter who called the company to request a response to Mr. Schlosser's criticisms. The fax said: "His opinion is outvoted 45 million to 1 every single day, because that's how many customers around the world choose to come to McDonald's for our menu of variety, value and quality."

Katherine Dalton, who lives on a beef cattle farm in New Castle, Kentucky, is a contributing editor to Chronicles.

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Letter From Rockford

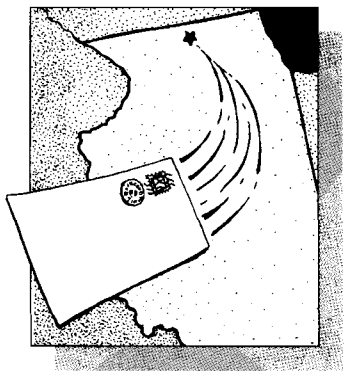
by Scott P. Richert

Breakin' Up Is Hard To Do

After the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals officially declared that the Rockford school-desegregation lawsuit would come to an end on June 30, 2002 (see *Letter From Rockford*, June), many Rockfordians simply assumed that a return to local control would solve all of our problems. But even when court-ordered spending has ended, the Rockford school district will still shell out over $9,000 per student, test scores will still be lower than they were when the lawsuit began, and students will still attend schools where violence is an everyday occurrence. Just as the 800-pound gorilla of judicial taxation prevented many of us from seeing that the school district's *non-court-ordered* spending has increased dramatically over the past 12 years, the draconian "remedies" ordered by the federal district court obscured the reality that Rockford's schools, even without federal intervention, would likely have undergone a major crisis over the past decade.

The problems faced by District 205 are rooted not in racism, as the court alleged, but in school consolidation. As Bill Kauffman writes in his book, *With Good Intentions? Reflections on the Myth of Progress in America*, "The number of school districts in America has free fallen: 127,531 in 1932; 83,718 in 1950; 40,520 in 1960; 17,995 in 1970; 15,709 in 1980; 14,556 in 1992." In the space of 60 years, during which the population of the United States rose by over 60 percent, the number of school districts plummeted by over 88 percent.

Here in Rockford, the school-consolidation craze began even earlier, about 1914. Each round of consolidation brought more school closings, more busing, less parental involvement, more reliance on state and federal funding. Finally, in 1989, it brought the closing of West High School and a court order mandating busing for racial balancing. Today, District 205 encompasses over 170 square miles, and 27,000 students are enrolled in 39 elementary schools, six middle schools, and only four high schools. That is one high school per 42.5 square miles. The district considers a school's "walk zone" to be anywhere



within a radius of 1.5 miles—an area only slightly over seven square miles. Everyone else must be bused.

My own experience as a public-school student was very different. In the midst of the consolidation frenzy, something remarkable had happened in my hometown in West Michigan: We deconsolidated our school district. When my father was growing up, Spring Lake was part of the Grand Haven school district. Although he attended elementary school in Spring Lake, he was bused across the Grand River to Grand Haven for junior high and high school. But in the mid-60's, the Spring Lake school district was spun off from Grand Haven. Over the next 30 years, despite the fact that Spring Lake and Grand Haven are demographically comparable, the schools in my hometown consistently outperformed Grand Haven's schools academically. (Grand Haven had the advantage in sports.) The biggest differences? Grand Haven's district was ten times as large as Spring Lake's, and Grand Haven spent more money per pupil than we did.

As Bill Kauffman writes,

> a growing, by now impressively stout body of evidence indicates that small schools—"those enrolling no more than 400 students in high school, for instance"—"may provide better educations than their larger counterparts, as a function (at least in part) of their small size."

By that standard, in fact, the Spring Lake school district was on the large side, with about 600 students in high school.

If the evidence indicates that smaller is better, why has there been such a relentless push for school consolidation? Proponents used to argue that larger districts are "more efficient" (at what?) and that they save money (District 205 is the third-largest in Illinois, and per-pupil costs rank among the top ten). Today, however, they are more likely to justify creating massive Columbine-style schools for social reasons, combining consolidation with desegregation.

Gary Orfield, the co-director of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard and an expert witness for the plaintiffs in the Rockford schools case, told Gannett News Service on July 17 that "In very few states do white students have significant contact with non whites. We have a very serious problem when the now-majority group isolates itself from minority groups." Another sociologist, John Logan of the University of Albany, argued that this situation presents an educational problem: "We expect children will have to succeed in a multiethnic, multiracial world, but we're raising them in school districts where they don't get that multiracial experience." Orfield attacked the very concept of smaller, neighborhood schools, telling Gannett that, "if the promise of returning to neighborhood schools means systematic inequality, the country ought to know about it," and urging the media to devote more attention to the issue.

In the school desegregation and consolidation battles, the true intentions of the proponents of "multiculturalism" and "diversity" are laid bare. What could be more diverse than an American public-school system composed of small neighborhood schools? To the extent that ethnic neighborhoods still exist, such schools could be become centers of particular ethnic cultures—this one, Swedish; that one, Polish; the one a few blocks over, Mexican. Despite their rhetoric, however, multiculturalists would be horrified by such schools. They really want the "products" of public schools to be the cultural equivalent of the Unitarian Universalist Church: generically American—liberal, rootless, interchangeable. Anyone with a different vision of education is, *ipso facto*, a "racist"—which is why Ted Biondo and Patti Delugas (the outgoing "conservatives" on the Rockford school board) dare not mention the possibility of breaking up District 205. c

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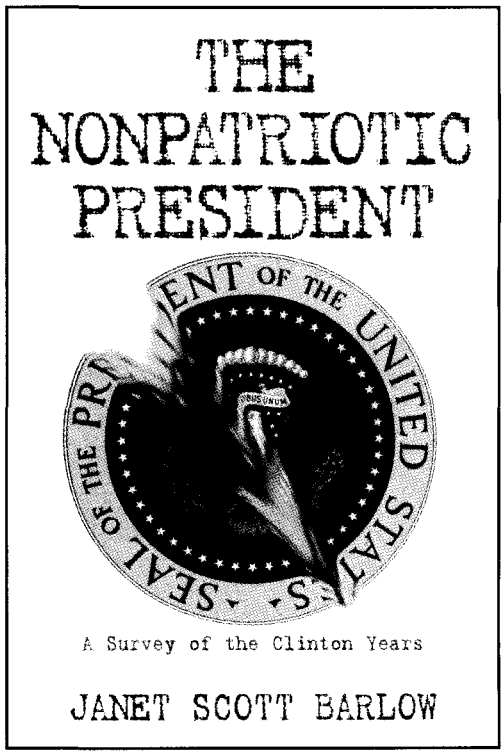

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Letter From England

by Michael McMahon

Credit Where Credit's Due

◆

Tony Blair's promised target before being elected to his first term in office was "Education, education, education"; some months into his second term, it is clear that his promise has been honored, and that his target has been hit—clean between the eyes. English education lies unconscious on the canvas. If there is any real learning going on in this country, it is in spite of—not because of—his efforts, and those of his anticultural precursors in the capital-driven conservative party. Between them, the nation's politicians have spent the last three or four generations reducing education to a process in which there is little room for the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual enrichment that a civilized society would expect of its schools.

Contemporary education is in intellectual chaos. This year, the traditional A' level (the single-subject examination hitherto taken in twos or threes by 18-year-olds at the end of their high-school careers) has been wrecked. Sixth-formers were expected to study five subjects to the new "AS level" in their penultimate school year, turning three or four of them into the new "A level" thereafter. Those who opposed this were rubbished as reactionaries, but even their most cynical expectations were surpassed by what happened this summer when the first round of examinations was endured. Things went so wildly amiss that the government announced an inquiry even while the first batch of candidates was taking the exam.

The practical arrangements were farcical. Many students found themselves timetabled to sit in examination halls for more hours than the school day contains, and some had to be kept *incommunicado* overnight by their teachers until they could write their papers on the following day. But this was nothing compared to the academic absurdities of the enterprise. The argument had been that two AS levels would be worth one old A' level, and that the AS courses would be half as long but to the same standard as before. It was a false argument. The critics had been right, and head teachers throughout the land complained of the new dispensation's tedious reliance on rote learning and its lack of academic rigor. A' levels have not just been dumbed down; they have been dumbed *out*.

The cultural degradation of English education is almost complete. Now that every moment of the school day is spoken for by the prescriptive national curriculum, there is no room for high culture to be slipped in by teachers sympathetic to it. The writ of the national curriculum does not run in the last two years of secondary schooling, which are undertaken after the age at which children may legally leave school. That window of educational opportunity has been shut. One of the strongest criticisms of the new AS level arrangement is that it has driven free time from the system. The penultimate year of English secondary education used to be a chance for young minds to expand before the final furlong of exams, in a relatively relaxed atmosphere. It is now just another year on the treadmill. There is little opportunity or energy for acting in the school play, performing in the school orchestra, or writing for the school magazine. The only culture most schoolkids are now exposed to is that written into the national curriculum, our mandatory educational instruction manual.

Those cultural elements do not correspond to my own inheritance, which I did my best to hand down to my own children and to the generations of schoolchildren I taught before I was modernized out of the classroom three years ago. The birthright of contemporary English schoolchildren has been sold for a mess of pottage—an expression few of them (or their modern-minded teachers) would understand, and even fewer find familiar. It is a dish with many foreign ingredients. Our children are no longer nourished by native values, but force-fed politically correct pap.

Nowhere is this more true than in the compulsory subject of religious education, which has effectively educated religion out of our schools. By law, Christianity is supposed to predominate, but it does not—even in many schools that are denominationally "Christian." The national religious curriculum has created generations of children and young adults who are faintly familiar with any number of foreign faiths, and just as disdainful of each. Who can blame them? If we teach them that the god with an elephant's head is as worthy of reverence as the Head that was mocked and crowned with thorns, is it any wonder that they regard each with equal indifference? Most of our youngsters can tell you what Ramadan is, but ask them to recite the Lord's Prayer, and they're stumped. At the time of Diwali, you will find countless schools festooned with festal candles, but come Easter, you will look for resurrection tableaux in vain.

Soon, Easter won't be coming at all. As far as schools are concerned, from 2003 on, Easter is scrapped. Easter is an inconvenient interruption to the routine of rote learning because it is a festival that falls annually on different dates. The whole school year is to be regularized and the calendar recast to conform to the pace of the educational conveyor belt. Another casualty on the cards is the liberatingly long summer vacation. It is a hangover from a time when life—and education—was in harmony with nature: The holiday corresponded with the season of the harvest. In mechanized, urbanized England, that correspondence counts for naught.

This symbolic break in continuity with Christendom marks not just the rejection and abandonment of religion, but a loss of our cultural inheritance. Footnotes in English literature textbooks now include explanations of even the most basic Christian terms, for today's students will not have encountered them elsewhere. This matters less and less, as the more demanding texts of the traditional canon are abandoned in favor of more accessible contemporary fiction. Earlier this year, the examinations boards introduced plans to drop Shakespeare as a compulsory subject. There was uproar. The education minister struck a traditionalist pose, denouncing the proposal to spike the literary canon and refusing to allow the Bard to be barred from the curriculum. "Hoorah!" cried the popular press. "The works of our greatest writer are still taught in our schools!" They would cheer rather less if they knew *how* Shakespeare is taught. Fourteen-year-olds have

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to "study" one of his plays; it is almost always *Romeo and Juliet* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, chosen for their relative accessibility. But such study is hardly rigorous. The giveaway is in the exam scripts: Candidates write not of the events of the play, but of scenes from the film. In the case of *Romeo and Juliet*, answers frequently refer to such anachronisms as Tybalt drawing his gun, or of petrol stations catching fire. To these children, *Romeo and Juliet* is a cinematic—not a literary or theatrical—experience. The same is true of most 16-year-olds who study *Macbeth*. If Roman Polanski earned a penny for every time an educationally resistant teenager asked his teacher to rewind the video to the "bit where the man gets an arrow in his head," he would be a very rich man indeed, but our 16-year-olds are not much culturally richer: There is no such event in Shakespeare's play.

Contemporary English schoolchildren are equally untainted by knowledge of their historical inheritance. History in primary and in the lower levels of secondary schools is largely taught by theme and does not put the present in the context of the past. Ask one of the diminishing number of 16-year-olds that have opted to study history for the date of the Battle of Trafalgar, the names of the Stuart Kings, or the wives of Henry VIII, and you'll get a blank look. Show them the gloriously garbled comic classic *1066 and All That*, and they just won't get the jokes. They are not in touch with the past, except insofar as it justifies the political present and future. The Empire is mentioned only to be mocked; the historic heroes of the nation are unsung.

In fact, there is hardly any singing at all. Music has been squeezed to the very margin of the curriculum. If there is any singing in schools, it is multicultural. When I was a child, I sang as a child: "Hearts of Oak," "The British Grenadiers," "Farewell and Adieu," "Early One Morning"—folk songs handed on from one generation to the next. Now, if children are taught to sing, it is in a class, darkly: They are taught contemporary subcultural trash. More likely, though, is that, like Belloc's cultural invaders, they know no songs at all—which is perhaps appropriate. For, in contemporary English education, there is precious little to sing about.

Michael McMahon taught in private and public schools in England until 1999.

Letter From Virginia

by Wayne Allensworth

What's Wrong With "Compassionate Conservatism"?

◆

When my family and I moved to Purcellville nearly ten years ago, I was surprised by how much traffic came through our little town. Purcellville had a population of less than 2,000 then, and the Old Colonial Highway, which doubles as the town's Main Street, began piling up well before 6:00 A.M. on the weekdays, a steady stream of trucks and cars crowding the two-lane road on their way to the new highway, Route 7, which leads to Washington, D.C., and its environs. By the hundreds and thousands, the economic nomads from the rural Blue Ridge area and their poorer relations from West Virginia poured through town, stopping off for gas and coffee at the 7-Eleven and its rival, the Amoco station, both situated at the crossroads between Purcellville and Lincoln. Many of these folks' ancestors made a living as farmers (and, later, as coal miners) in an era that now seems as remote as the Middle Ages, but the descendants of the mountain people have survived by working on construction sites, driving trucks, and performing other assorted blue-collar jobs. They are mostly employees now, not the yeomanry Jefferson correctly saw as the only real bulwark of a republic. Still, it's a living. Many West Virginia counties, in particular, depend on the influx of dollars from those jobs to survive, if not to prosper.

In my memory, the fate of the American working class is now connected with those lines of predawn headlights and the sights and sounds of the gradual displacement of the mountain people by little brown men (and women) from Mexico, El Salvador, and other points south of the Rio Grande. Ten years ago, the "Hispanic" population of Purcellville was virtually nil. Not anymore. I can see the coming defeat of the mountain people every day at the convenience stores (all of which now offer cut rates for long-distance calls to Mexico and El Salvador), at a school construction site in neighboring Hamilton (there are few white or black men working there), and in a house, packed with Spanish-speaking immigrants, in my own neighborhood.

In my mind's eye, I saw the headlights and the faces of the mountain people as I scanned the front page of the *Washington Times* on March 3 and felt an anger I could barely contain. The headline read "Salvador Illegals Get Bush Reprieve." President George W. Bush, the "compassionate conservative" (as if other traditionalists aren't), pledged to halt deportations of illegal immigrants from El Salvador for the next 18 months in view of the recent earthquake in that unfortunate country. Salvadoran President Francisco Flores hailed the decision as more important than direct U.S. aid. (Congress has appropriated $110 million for earthquake relief, while President Bush has promised more to come; the United States also responded by sending rescue workers to the stricken country.) It seems that the hundreds of thousands of Salvadoran illegals living in the United States are responsible for a large part of the estimated $1.7 billion that makes its way to their country each year, about 14 percent of the country's GDP. President Bush's action, in his words, allows Salvadorans to "continue to work here" and to "remit some of their wages back home" to "support" the country's "recovery effort." He failed to mention that it allows them to violate U.S. law.

So what's wrong with such "compassion?" No decent person can help but feel pity for those who have suffered in El Salvador, and the United States appears to have been more than generous in response to the tragedy. (Especially noteworthy are rescue workers who volunteered to help and the humanitarian aid gathered by church groups, which apparently did not need Washington's moral guidance.) Nevertheless, President Bush's "reprieve" is wrongheaded, even wrongheartedly, as is his pledge to pour more U.S. funds into that sad country. President Bush's misconception of "compassion" is the same as that of most others living in an atomized urban society where bonds of community, kinship, and patriotism have been seriously diluted, where CNN's cameras divert our attention from the plight of our neighbors by exploiting the suffering of distant strangers, and where the notion of personal responsibility, which "compassionate conservatism" reportedly seeks to boost, has practically disappeared.

President Bush is soothing his own conscience by freely dispensing other people's money. Undoubtedly, he "feels the pain" of Salvadorans (after all, he can

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see the pictures on TV) and is either ignorant of, or numb to, the hardships his "compassion" may be imposing on his own people. Allegedly the President of a republic, he is making a grand gesture akin to an emperor opening the temple granaries for the luckless lower castes. He apparently has no idea what the traditional "conservative" view of the state's proper role is.

The President appeared very self-satisfied with his gesture. He often does these days, with his promises of school vouchers to "help" the "disadvantaged" (and possibly extend federal control to private schools), his plans for lending a federal hand to "faith-based" organizations (I noticed a personalized license plate recently that read "ALAKBAR" on a vehicle carrying a fellow "person of faith" on his merry way), and his promises to show generosity to our poor Latin American neighbors (but not West Virginians). President Bush, it appears, is as much a child of the 60's as his corrupt and bloated predecessor, practicing telescopic philanthropy from the comfort and safety of the White House, ever ready to spend money that is not his own, to send other people's children to fight and die in alien lands, and to initiate grand schemes in which he will play no personal role. There is nothing "compassionate" nor "conservative" about Mr. Bush's fuzzy ideology.

Wayne Allensworth, who recently moved from Purcellville, Virginia, to Keller, Texas, is not a "compassionate conservative."

Letter From Chile

by Tom Jenney

Living in a Glass House

◆

In January of last year, Chilean actress Danielle Tobar made international news by moving into a glass house in downtown Santiago. During the short course of "Project Nautilus," the intimate details of her daily life were open to the (largely prurient) curiosity of onlookers. After only six days, Tobar abandoned the house, claiming security concerns.

At that time, I was backpacking in southern Chile. I did not find the news surprising. In a world culture that has produced MTV's *Real World* and real-time voyeur websites, the glass house is the next logical step. I wasn't even surprised that it happened in Chile. The country has a large "artsy" element, especially among the "wired" generation. Combine "artsy" and "wired," and the glass house is a natural result.

What really struck me about the whole affair was the aptness of the glass house as a metaphor for Chile's relationship with the outside world. Since the brief reign of Salvador Allende's Marxist-Leninist *Unidad Popular* (UP) government (1970-73), the internal affairs of this small country have often been the subject of intense international scrutiny. The window panes on the house are highly convex, causing certain inhabitants—like Allende and former military dictator Augusto Pinochet—to be magnified in the eyes of observers. This magnification is accompanied by a great deal of distortion.

This was my fifth visit to Chile in five years. Politically, it was by far the most interesting of the visits. The trip coincided with several major events: first, the election and inauguration of Ricardo Lagos, the first Socialist Party president since Allende was deposed; second, the return to the country of Pinochet after 17 months' detention in London; third, the beginning of the prosecution of Pinochet for acts of violence committed during his 17-year rule; and fourth, the arrival in Chile of U.S. Justice Department officials investigating Pinochet's involvement in the 1976 Washington, D.C., car-bombing of former UP minister Orlando Letelier.

Like actress Tobar, who found it impossible to ignore the stares and hoots of her viewers, the Chilean nation is keenly aware of outside pressure. In his inaugural address, Lagos spoke of the foreign visitors at the event (including Janet Reno), saying that they would "tell the world that Chileans were able to rediscover truth, justice, and respect for human rights." This kind of "we have to show the world" statement is now a common refrain in press editorials, but efforts at prosecuting Pinochet and other military officers only began to gain real ground after October 16, 1998, when the former dictator was kidnapped by British authorities at the behest of Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón. In August 1999, Chilean Judge Juan Guzmán began indicting military officers for human-rights abuses. In the two years since, the case has continued to twist and turn its way through the Chilean legal system, although most observers believe that the 85-year-old "English patient" will not live to see an actual trial.

Chile's glass house has a way of magnifying hypocrisy: Just compare how Pinochet (2,000 to 3,000 killed, some in combat) and Fidel Castro (15,000 to 17,000 political prisoners killed) have fared in the European and American media. More importantly, the glass house also tends to magnify historical distortions. One enduring myth is that Chilean constitutional democracy was destroyed during the fall of Allende and the UP on September 11, 1973. In truth, Chilean democracy was long dead by the time Pinochet took over. For an alternative date of demise, try November 10, 1971, when Castro arrived in Chile for what turned out to be a three-week tour. During his visit, Castro gave Allende an inscribed AK-47 rifle. This was a very telling gesture: Throughout Allende's regime (and with his tacit consent), planes and boats smuggled Cuban arms into the country and into the hands of leftist guerrillas. The scenes of Allende in his last hours, wandering around the Moneda palace with a bottle of Chivas in one hand and Fidel's AK in the other, are aptly symbolic. His attempts to preserve democracy were the political equivalent of a drunken stumble; at the same time, he always kept one finger in the trigger guard of violent revolution. The death certificate of Chilean democracy was issued on August 22, 1973. On that day, the Chamber of Deputies, voting 81 to 47, approved an accord denouncing the "grave rupture in the constitutional and legal order of the Republic" and stating that Chile's armed forces had a constitutional duty to "put an immediate end" to the situation.

Another myth perpetuated by the mainstream media is the idea that the UP's failure was due to an economic "destabilization" orchestrated by the U.S. government—specifically, by the CIA. The CIA did play a well-documented role in keeping opposition media alive in the face of government harassment, but the left is always waiting for some magic document to be declassified that will prove that the U.S. government caused Chile's economic implosion. This is lamp-rubbing. No matter what is unearthed, the CIA was not responsible for nationalizing private industries, destroying the price system, or creating 500-per-

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cent inflation.

Myths and hypocrisy aside, the case of Chile poses some tough moral problems. Although it's true that the leftists brought the repression on themselves, the brutality of the military government is difficult to justify.

In mid-March, near the end of my trip, I rented a car in Iquique and drove to the far northern seacoast hamlet of Pisagua. Wedged onto a strip of rocky coast at the base of thousand-foot desert headlands, it is a place of existential isolation, a natural prison. Around the turn of the century, when Pisagua was still a booming nitrate port, a jail was built in the town. After September 1973, much of the town was turned into a prison camp. For a period of two years, some 800 prisoners were housed in Pisagua for detention, interrogation, torture, and punishment. Nineteen were killed, and their bodies disappeared. In the summer of 1989, the village—having long since returned to its status as a quiet home to a few dozen fisherman and shellfish divers—made news again. A mass unmarked grave, containing the 19 bodies, was discovered in the town's cemetery. Pinochet had stepped down from power only a few months before, and the story rapidly became a *cause célèbre* among those trying to make truth and reconciliation (or retribution) pillars of the new democracy.

Driving to Pisagua, I miscalculated the time needed to cross the desert and descended into the hamlet long after dusk. Too late to find a suitable camping spot, I checked into the only hotel in town. It had been open for a year and was located in, of all places, the old jail building. The woman who ran the hotel (her family had bought it from the government) explained that the bad things had taken place elsewhere in the town. Also, they had done a lot to make the jail hospitable: The guest rooms were in the administrative wing of the structure, and some of the cells had pool tables in them. Still, the whole thing was more than a little creepy. Lying in bed and listening to the cool wind rustling through the fronds in the atrium, it was impossible not to think of the terror and suffering endured by the prisoners during those two years. Those thoughts were compounded the next day, when I visited the empty grave.

And yet, the question remains: What do you do when ultra-leftists are taking over your country by force? My instinctive preference is for the kind of armed resistance practiced during the Allende years by *Patria y Libertad*. However, even if such resistance had been successful, it would have been far more costly in human life than Pinochet's *golpe*. More likely, Chile would still be in a state of civil war, like Colombia.

The guerrillas—and their "civilian" allies—undoubtedly needed to be jailed or exiled. Torture and execution are different matters. I would like to believe that Christians would be incapable of torturing or executing prisoners. Still, in a land where prominent clerics espoused liberation theology and violent class struggle, it should not have been surprising to see a dearth of Christian mercy.

As Chile has moved closer toward putting Pinochet on trial, there have been some grumbles from the military and from the large minority of citizens who regard him as the savior of their country. Remember, in the (mandatory) 1988 plebiscite, 43 percent of Chileans voted to extend his presidency for another eight years. Even so, I believe that civil turmoil over the issue will be minimal. The most interesting irony, as Chile's democracy continues to assert itself, is that the new democracy was made possible in large part by the very same military government that is now on trial. Indeed, the most important achievement of Pinochet's reforms was to create social peace by depoliticizing wide sectors of the Chilean economy.

Today's Chilean democracy is blessed with good leadership on both sides of the present political spectrum. So far, Lagos has kept his inaugural promise to be "president of all the Chileans." The problem with Lagos, as the country limps out of a hard two-year recession, is that he does not have the ideological conviction necessary to finish the privatization revolution and to create the kind of business and investment environment that will allow the country to catch the next wave of strong economic growth.

Lagos' opponent in the election was Joaquín Lavín, a 48-year-old economist who served as the highly popular mayor of Santiago's Las Condes suburb. Lavín went from his narrow loss to an easy win in Santiago's mayoral election. If Lavín can win the presidency in 2005, it will be good news for Chile's future. Lavín understands that, if Chile is going to achieve the growth rates necessary to catch up with the industrialized world and to eradicate severe poverty, the government must allow domestic and foreign investment to effect a rapid technological transformation of Chile's productive capacity. Further, he would let Chilean workers profit from globalization by allowing the privatized pension companies to invest a larger share of their assets in foreign securities (the current limit is 20 percent).

Politically, the election of Lavín in 2005 would mean that Chile's democracy has finally made peace with its authoritarian past. If Chileans prove capable of overcoming their political rifts, and if they succeed in joining the First World nations economically, they will richly deserve the resulting peace and prosperity. Chileans are a hard-working people, and they are justifiably proud of their beautiful country. Most of all, they have suffered a lot during their three decades under the hot glare of the glass house.

Tom Jenney is a freelance writer living in Arlington, Virginia.

Letter From Mississippi

by Walter D. Kennedy

What Price for My Soul?

◆

What price would you place upon your soul? For the people of Mississippi, this question recently became more than a mere philosophical or theological inquiry. True enough, all of us face this question in small, unnoticed ways as we move through life. Thankfully, most of us can make our choice quietly, in private, and away from public scrutiny. But occasionally, people are forced to make their choice with the entire world watching. The recent vote in Mississippi on whether to keep the state flag (which contains the Confederate Battle Flag) was just such an occasion. The vote, 65 percent in favor to 35 percent opposed, was an overwhelming victory of tradition over political correctness.

Despite relentless accusations of racism from the politically correct media and claims by leaders of the business community that the current flag hinders economic development, the people of Mississippi rallied to the defense of their flag and their society. What motivated such a vote? Why did the people of Mississippi, the citizens of the "poorest" state

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in the Union, reject their business leaders' promise of economic progress? And why make such a controversial choice for a symbol, a mere flag?

Non-Southerners habitually underestimate the importance that Southerners attach to their heritage. No doubt the p.c. crowd thought it would be a simple matter to use the media monopoly to propagate the notion that the current flag is a symbol of racism, which hinders economic investments in Mississippi. With near-absolute control of the media, the left believed a quick and sure victory was at hand. The scalawag politicians begged them to attack, the media cranked out their propaganda, the self-appointed black leadership declared war on the flag, and the state's "conservative" politicians bravely declared their neutrality. The flag was left to defend itself. Still, the road to victory was not as smooth as expected: The people began to take their stand. Public hearings organized to drum up support for changing the state flag became large and strident pro-flag events. The liberal former governor heading up the effort to abandon the state flag claimed that these people were an insignificant neo-Confederate minority that did not represent the desire of the people. But polls conducted by the state's newspapers before the vote demonstrated that over one third of the state's black population saw no reason to change the flag. Things are never as simple as black and white—especially down South!

At last, the ballots were cast, and supporters of the ancient symbols and traditions of the South won. Outside of the South, there seems to be little appreciation of why the people of Mississippi decided to keep their flag. Most of the media pundits attributed the vote to some form of explicit or latent racism—the liberal party line that Southerners have learned to expect. But is this reality?

The love that Southerners have for their heritage and region is more than symbolism; it is more than a handful of neo-Confederates refusing to accept the arbitrary rule of the imperial federalists. It encompasses more than the lore of the War for Southern Independence. It includes a unique regional culture that still survives in a hostile world, a culture where people still maintain and cultivate kinship beyond the "nuclear family." Family includes not only those present but those past and those yet to come. Duty to the past, present, and future is not compartmentalized—it is indivisible. Churches are still the center of most non-urban Southern communities. Southerners are, in fact, a "folk"—a people who recognize themselves as different from (as opposed to better than) other people, people whose conservative political values are established upon a history of adherence to the original Constitution, state's rights, limited federalism, and individual liberty.

The enemies of Mississippi's flag spent almost three-quarters of a million dollars in their effort to destroy it. They promised Mississippians economic development if they would abandon their heritage. Yet, given the opportunity to select between the material or the spiritual, the people of Mississippi voted in overwhelming numbers to reject their scalawag political leadership and to ignore the attempts of the business community to bribe them with promises of economic gain.

The people of Mississippi looked within themselves and saw that there was no Wal-Mart sale tag on their soul. By the standards of this world, Mississippians made an unprofitable choice; by the standards of the traditional South, however, they made the only choice that honor would allow. Thank God for the people of Mississippi!

Walter D. Kennedy, with his brother James, is the author of The South Was Right!

Letter From Palermo

by Andrei Navrozov

Untitled

◆

Asked in ever more incredulous tones, the question is warm with sympathy on the lips of friends and cold as Damask steel in the mouths of enemies. "Why Palermo?" One frivolous reply is that, back in Venice, the crab season is now over; the white-sneaker hydra of package tourism is about to hot-millipede it over the bridges; and our cook, having just won $3,000 after translating her dream of a school of fish into lottery numbers, has gone on holiday. Another is that our new apartment in S. Stae, which had been found at the 11th hour just as the proprietor at Palazzo Mocenigo was threatening to call in the law, has a sitting tenant who will not leave before autumn. He is Paolo Costa, and I can't very well call in the law to throw *him* out because he is the mayor of Venice.

Still another explanation is that once every two years, in high summer, my beloved Venice loses face and becomes a kind of cultural sewer. This is the season of the Biennale, the witches' sabbat that brings all the world's scum to our canals by way of the art galleries, the charitable foundations, and (for all I know) the real-estate agencies and the massage parlors of New York and London. I was there for the opening dinner, held on a converted tugboat belonging to the director of the Guggenheim, and was so repulsed by what I saw—not that I am easily repulsed, mind you, least of all by massage parlors—that I took the next flight to London, figuring that everybody I loathe there was already busy networking in Venice. Fate was swift to reward me for my good judgment with a new insight.

Some months ago, at the country house of a mutual friend in England, I had met a young painter by the name of Sophie de S—; now, as soon as I arrived in London, it transpired that she wanted me and my Russian friend Gusov to sit for a double portrait. We are still unsure about the title. *Two Losers? Last Bets? Russian Roulette? Neighbors by a Hundred?* But anyway, the idea is clear. Sophie, who has been painting since she was 17, began her life in art as a model for Lucian Freud, an inveterate gambler, and was well acquainted with Francis Bacon, whose profligacy at the tables was legendary. For us, it was the once-in-a-lifetime chance to be immortalized, in attitudes so long cherished, by someone who *understood*. Hence Gusov, who cannot stay still for a minute unless he is playing (we once sat side by side in the gaming room of Aspinalls for 14 hours without eating, drinking, or using the toilet), turned up as scheduled at Sophie's studio, his picturesque hair dutifully on end.

The studio itself, where the painter sleeps, wakes, and works from dawn to dusk, can be described as a kind of modern-art installation entitled *Insult to Modernism*, or *Far From the Venice Biennale*. The floor is a recrudescence of paint that brings to mind the term *impasto*, and every surface of the attic rooms bears witness to the daily, exhausting, and deeply physical struggle between pigment and temperament. My conversation with Sophie began when I threw a cigarette butt on her floor and she, with the polite sar-

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casm of a croupier asked to accept a bet after the ball had dropped, said that her floor was not dirty, it was just covered in paint.

"Painting in art schools is more or less out now," writes the English critic Matthew Collings in his intentionally irreverent, and often unintentionally revealing, encyclopedia of contemporary art. "You could easily go through your art school years today without doing one. But it's not true that you would actually be encouraged to never [*sic*] do one, or punished if you secretly did one." Every hour that Gusov and I sat for Sophie, I had the growing sense that the iconic silhouette of the inside of that bent elbow, just below the roll of the work-shirt sleeve, set in a luminous outline against the window frame, the sprawling black tree branches, and the streaming dark clouds of a foul London afternoon, belonged to the spiritual musculature of the last artist in Europe. Remember *The Last Man in Europe*, Orwell's original title of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*? Well, in *that* ultimate, desperate sense.

She let me look at some of her family papers, kept in what I remember as a paint-splattered biscuit tin, or maybe it was a paint-splattered velvet box. Baron de S—, her grandfather, fled Russia after 1917, and as the connection established itself in the snaking copperplate of Winter Palace invitations and the old orthography of yellowed deeds and long-broken covenants, my already seething brain grew all the more inflamed. She was the Last Artist in Europe, and of course I was desperately curious to know what she thought of the mafia of her contemporaries, most of whom I had left behind in Venice the week before. Her hesitant replies reminded me of my first meeting with the English poet Charles Causley, when, as a young angry contributor to the various books pages, I had tried to goad him into agreeing with the thousand nasty things I had to say, in print and in private, about the literary figures then relevant. Well, Causley kept saying, you know, it's difficult, writing.

But now, as my eloquent loathing and my stammering fury broke in their turn on the granite detachment of Sophie's mildest ellipses, slowly I began to catch on to what it was that I always believed was so banal, and so evil, about contemporary artists. One day, after leaving her studio, I bought a copy of the Collings encyclopedia, *Blimey!*, and was gratified to find that my recent intuition was wholly supported by fact. Blimey indeed, I said to myself. The truth is so simple. What is banal and evil about contemporary artists is that *they don't paint*. Just as contemporary architects don't build buildings, contemporary musicians don't play instruments, contemporary generals don't win wars, contemporary lawyers don't defend the innocent, and contemporary doctors don't kill their patients only because contemporary lawyers would take them to the cleaners if they did:

> Art wasn't about being in a studio creating. It was about being in a studio creating and then being in a smart white gallery and having a catalogue and reviews in art magazines and flying to different international art spots and having curators and professional uptight zombies of the artworld suck up to you briefly.

Perhaps Causley was not entirely justified in his quietist, elastic, almost oriental forbearance with respect to the monsters I was hoping to slay with my pen, but the fact remains that the writers whom I took turns describing as banal and evil were at least *writing books*. Here, by contrast, it is as though some wicked and slothful gardener raised on Thoreau—whom Western civilization, like a dowager empress breathing her dying wish, has at last permitted to let a thousand flowers bloom—has gleefully turned, instead of to rakes, trellises, and pesticides, to the stack of penny dreadfuls in the potting shed. The analogy is not haphazard, because the Walden that the artists in question have been exploiting, ever since the mustache was stuck on the *Mona Lisa*, is literature. In short, their mafia is actually on my turf, and for this I have all the more reason to hate them.

Literature enters the picture with the title. That Francis Bacon, for instance, is to my mind among the finest painters the world has ever produced is neither here nor there; what is objectively true is that he *painted*, and every existing photograph of the interior of his studio bears witness to the fact that he painted *often*; so it is par for the course that the work that eventually won him recognition was entitled *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1945). Now, where is the literature in that? Conversely, it hardly matters that, in my view, an art mafioso like Damien Hirst has the soul of a crooked accountant trapped in the heart of a talentless clown; what is objectively true is that he never spent any time painting, and hence it is not surprising that the work that made him famous, a tank of formaldehyde containing a shark, was entitled *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (1991).

The shameless separation of modern art from painting, drawing, and sculpture, and their concomitant substitution with literature, philosophy, and politics, has produced a kind of Hollywood of artistic expression, where the intellectual clichés of the past hundred years are collected, regurgitated, produced, directed, acted, made into pictures, and launched globally. Like Hollywood, this cinema of banal ideas is entirely in the hands of a ruthless mafia, concerned solely with the perpetuation of its prestige and the augmentation of its influence. Hence, an artist like Sophie, with bills to pay for her turpentine and her chrome yellow, is as alien to the whole business as Chekhov would be to Paramount.

So, perhaps, we had better not think of the attic in Ladbroke Grove as an art installation entitled *Far From the Venice Biennale*. And perhaps Gusov and I should back off and stop pestering Sophie about giving our portrait a provocative, entertaining, literary title like *Russian Roulette*. And next time I sit for her, if there is a next time, perhaps I should entertain the last painter in Europe with some rough tales from Palermo, instead of explaining to her how the mafia works in her hometown.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

LIBERAL ARTS

YOU DESERVE A BREAK TODAY

"An 11-year old Detroit boy filed a $1 million lawsuit against fast food giant McDonald's Corp on Monday after he allegedly ate part of a cheeseburger that was infested with maggots, his lawyer said.

"The boy, Vincent Ingram, discovered the maggots after chomping into the cheeseburger at home on June 19 . . .

"McDonald's . . . called the allegations 'questionable,' and said it had not received any facts to back up the claims."

—from "McDonald's Sued for Maggot-Infested Cheeseburger" (Reuters, July 3, 2001)

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Signs of the Times

"All the News Unfit to Print"

The systematic and deliberate destruction of the Yugoslav democratic revival by the "international community" and its Belgrade minions following the fall of Slobodan Milosevic may not be the most important news unfit to print of the year, but it is certainly the biggest untold story. As we approach the anniversary of this event, the time has come to tell it as it is.

In July 2000, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (*Demokratska opozicija Srbije*, DOS)—a loose coalition of 18 largely insignificant parties—selected Dr. Vojislav Kostunica as its presidential candidate against the incumbent, Slobodan Milosevic, who had called an election for September 24. This decision was a stroke of genius: Unlike the rest of DOS, Kostunica and his party (*Demokratska stranka Srbije*, DSS) were neither "pro-Western" nor tainted by previous dealings with the Milosevic regime. His blend of legalism, understated patriotism, and rejection of any compromise with the neocommunist establishment had struck a chord with the majority of voters. During the campaign, Kostunica's modesty and integrity (his slogan: "I can look you in the eye!") proved to be his greatest asset against a corrupt regime that had run out of tricks. Kostunica's victory—disputed by Milosevic, and sealed by the wave of street protests that soon swept over Serbia—also proved to be a meal ticket for the rest of the DOS. Democracy seemed to have triumphed yet again.

The U.S. administration had clearly hoped for a Milosevic victory. It would have provided continued justification for a simplistic yet effective anti-Serb policy in the Balkans—hence, a stream of pre-election "leaks" from Washington about the millions of dollars given to the opposition in Serbia. This played right into Milosevic's hands by ostensibly confirming his constant theme: The opposition was in the pay of the NATO powers that had bombed the country only two years previously. Worse still, those claims were true—but most Serbs, tired of Milosevic's long road to nowhere, either chose not to believe what looked like the regime's black propaganda or decided to trust Kostunica to keep the would-be quislings at bay.

After the election, and with Milosevic's fall imminent, the United States' plan B was to neutralize Kostunica by ensuring that the levers of real power went to the recipients of the Western largesse. The key player in this scheme was the present prime minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjic, the leader of the small but influential Democratic Party (*Demokratska stranka*, DS). Djindjic and his party were the Serbian variety of similar political groupings all over Eastern Europe: sharply dressed, technocratic, *nouveau-riche* yuppie-wannabes, explicitly postnational and committed to "the international community"—U.N. tribunals, gay rights, IMF-dictated privatizations and all. In Belgrade, their obedience was to be measured primarily by their eagerness to comply with the demands of The Hague's war-crimes tribunal. The common goal of the Djindjic-led "pro-Westerners" and their foreign mentors was to use Kostunica to take over the castle, retaining him as its nominal master during the transition.

Kostunica's challenge was clear: He must be himself—fair but firm with the defeated Socialists, flexible in his dealings with the outside world but uncompromising on the key issues of Serbia's dignity and sovereignty—amidst a coalition of cynical manipulators (Djindjic) and lightweights (the rest of DOS) who had no credibility with the people and who, therefore, sought to outbid each other in currying the favor of the West. Devoid of much constitutional authority from the outset, the president of Yugoslavia had to depend on his savvy and on the quality of his immediate team to turn his huge personal popularity into the only currency of politics: power.

Djindjic's task was even trickier. To bring down Milosevic, he had to risk giving Kostunica a straight flush; but after the job was done, he had to try to take those cards back, one by one. He needed to neutralize the danger of Kostunica discovering his potential as the undisputed national leader, and to preempt him abroad by promising more than Kostunica—or, indeed, any self-respecting Serb—would ever be willing to deliver. While never overstepping the mark in his dealings with Kostunica in those early days—and thus preserving the illusion of the new team's unity—Djindjic embarked on a short, sharp march through the institutions. The strategy was divided into three phases, and it has worked brilliantly.

The first phase (October 5, 2000, through December 23) was that of consolidation. Djindjic saw an opening in the fact that, in the chaotic aftermath of Milosevic's downfall, the only ostensibly functional state institution was the federal presidency. Djindjic shrewdly let Kostunica micromanage dozens of tasks large and small, absorbing himself in a whirlwind of activity. A prominent Belgrade lawyer says that Kostunica's opponents knew what they were doing:

> Djindjic counted on Kostunica's proverbial scruples to inhibit him from promoting his own friends and supporters—so much so that, in the ensuing scramble for positions and favors, it was, paradoxically, something of a liability to be perceived as "his man." In the early weeks, Kostunica stole the limelight with his foreign trips. He did not see that he was ensnared into a ruinous 18-hour work schedule while Djindjic took control over one key institution after another.

By the end of October, Djindjic's revolutionary device of ostensibly spontaneous "crisis committees" had been used to place his trustees in charge of all key media outlets and Serbia's yet-to-be-privatized public corporations. All the major federal ministerial posts—foreign affairs, finances, telecommunications, justice, interior—went to NGO-linked pro-Westerners or outright Djindjic allies. The next task for Djindjic was to secure an institutional basis for his ever-increasing power, and he set his sights on the premiership of Serbia. In Yugoslavia's loose federation, the real power rests with the two constituent republics; Serbia accounts for over nine-tenths of the population and economy. To attain his objective, Djindjic had to cajole Kostunica into agreeing to keep the DOS alliance going until Serbia's parliamentary elections on December 23.

By early November 2000, many Serbs wanted Kostunica to declare that DOS had fulfilled its role in bringing down Milosevic and that it was time for its many different parties, with their incom-

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patible programs and philosophies, to submit to a real test of their electoral strength. He was strongly urged to do so by many friends and political allies. Kostunica did not heed their advice, and some of his supporters now claim that this was a fatal mistake. Other DOS parties waited for this decision with marked nervousness, as it was obvious that only two of them—Kostunica's own DSS and Djindjic's DS—had any chance of polling more than the five percent of the vote needed to enter parliament. But he chose to keep the coalition alive, apprehensive that the collapse of DOS would hinder Serbia's long-delayed reintegration into international institutions and jeopardize the shaky federation.

In the December election, the heterogeneous DOS list scored an overwhelming victory. It won, however, only because it was presented under Kostunica's name. The entire "pro-Western" wing of DOS finally found itself propelled into real power. Djindjic duly named a cabinet that included a corrupt ex-secret policeman (interior minister Dusan Mihailovic); a long-time Milosevic ally who had changed sides in 1997 (former Belgrade Mayor Nebojsa Covic); a proponent of American-style school reform (Education Minister Gaso Knezevic); a local ally of "philanthropist" George Soros (Information Minister Zarko Korac); and an outspoken proponent of The Hague Tribunal and all its works (Justice Minister Vladan Batic). Kostunica's DSS received only the uninfluential ministry of education.

As soon as the election was over, the second phase of Kostunica's demise was under way (December 23, 2000, through June 28, 2001). Once Djindjic took control of the Serbian police and the state security service, it was suddenly OK to defy Kostunica, to present him with *faits accomplis*, even to be rude to him. In November, while visiting Greece, Kostunica was simply told that the DOS had agreed to make Milan Protic Yugoslavia's ambassador to the United States. Protic had made his mark during a visit to the United States in November 1999 by declaring on PBS that Milosevic was the only real culprit in the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and by averring his commitment to The Hague Tribunal. At that time, he was rewarded for his efforts with a hefty American grant, and the desire of the U.S. government to see him sent to Washington clinched his appointment. Once Kostunica was forced to swallow this bitter pill, a host of lesser diplomatic posts went to various Protic look-alikes. Foreign minister Svilanovic, while feigning respect for Kostunica, went to Washington in the first week of January to pay tribute to outgoing Secretary of State Madeleine Albright for "all that she had done to promote democracy in Yugoslavia." When she gloated about this in the American press, Svilanovic was invited to issue a denial. He refused. His like-minded, NGO-approved "cadres" now represent Yugoslavia not only in Washington but in Paris, Vienna (in the person of the former editor-in-chief of the Communist Party's official newspaper), Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague, Sofia, and Ottawa.

Kostunica's resistance to the drift was increasingly confined to rhetoric. His rancorous January 23 meeting in Belgrade with Carla Del Ponte, the chief prosecutor of The Hague Tribunal, can now be seen as his last hurrah. During her stay, Del Ponte shrewdly reached out to Djindjic, who promptly made statements about "no price being too high for rejoining Europe." The rest of the DOS, eager to be recognized by the West, started clamoring for "full compliance" with the Tribunal. By early March, the limits of Kostunica's ability to resist were reached, and he declared that "the international community, whatever that term means, seems to regret that Milosevic is gone" and that the U.S.-imposed deadline for Milosevic's arrest (March 31) and the West's single-minded insistence on submission to The Hague were incompatible with the ideals of democracy and legality that he was trying to defend.

Kostunica's appeals were ignored. While visiting Washington in the last week of March, Djindjic was encouraged to proceed under his own steam, which he did by arresting Milosevic in the early hours of April 1. Responding to the pressure from Washington (you arrest Slobo, we give you a little money; you deliver him to The Hague, we give you some more), he strengthened the hand of those bureaucrats within the State Department who sought to continue Clinton's flawed Balkan policy. By the time a weakened Kostunica came to Washington (May 9), it was far too late. The mind of the administration had already been made up: Only full compliance with The Hague would do.

The second phase of Kostunica's demise culminated in Milosevic's extradition, which took place on the hallowed day of Serbia's martyrs (June 28). It was entirely Djindjic's doing and was justified by another externally imposed deadline: the so-called donors' conference to refinance a portion of Yugoslavia's external debt. The extradition was certainly illegal, and probably marked an end of Kostunica as an effective leader. First, the Yugoslav government paved the way for Milosevic's extradition by bypassing the parliament and effectively overruling the constitution by decree. When the constitutional court ordered a temporary injunction against extradition while Milosevic appealed the federal administration's decree, Djindjic simply used the Serbian police to grab the former leader from his cell and pack him off to a NATO base in Bosnia. This was tantamount to a cold-blooded *coup d'etat*. Kostunica's claim that he did not know what was going to happen means either that he is now utterly powerless or that he chose not to know. Either way, he loses—as a legalist, as a politician, and as a national leader.

The third phase started on June 28. We don't know when it will end, but we can calculate its consequences: "Democracy" has been discredited in Serbia. The enthusiasm and idealism of the popular uprising of last October are being replaced by pervasive cynicism. The preferences of the "international community" are known, and they are embodied in Zoran Djindjic. He can now proceed to "privatize" the remnants of the impoverished country's economy (that is, to divide the spoils between himself and his cronies), to take over the Army, and—perhaps—to allow a powerless, increasingly irrelevant Vojislav Kostunica to linger on at his cavernous Palace of the Federation.

What will be left of Kostunica when the dust settles? He has surrendered even the option of irredentist resentment over Milosevic's fate. Should he move forward into more compromise, get stuck on this one issue (as though there were not other things to be done), or leave politics altogether? The optimists may say that we can roll up the map of Serbia because we shall not need it again for 20 years. That could be Kostunica's hope, too: "We are your prisoners; now, please forget us and go away." Logic and honesty do not go together, however. Let us hope he understands he should still remain honest. If he stays in office chiefly "to prevent something worse," he cannot.

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FOREIGN POLICY

Beat the Drum

by Scott McConnell

There are some foreign-policy questions that require all the wisdom America's leaders can summon—and some good luck as well. Responding to China's emergence as a military and economic power, for instance, may prove as difficult for the international system as coming to terms with Germany's rise was in the last century, with the consequences for getting it wrong even more severe.

But until the last few years, no sensible American would have considered the Balkans such a question, or indeed a major issue at all for the United States. The complexity of the ethnic configurations, the depth of their historic enmities—these were at least generally known to most American students of diplomacy and were captured in various aphorisms and historical vignettes: "Not worth the bones of a single healthy Pomeranian grenadier" (attributed to Otto von Bismarck); "An area which produces more history than it can consume locally" (attributed to Winston Churchill). Or my favorite, from Churchill's Balkan envoy Fitzroy Maclean's account of a 1944 conversation with the prime minister, when the two discussed the implications of the communist leanings of the Yugoslav partisans then receiving Allied aid.

> "Do you intend," [Churchill] asked, "to make Yugoslavia your home after the war?"
>
> "No sir," I replied.
>
> "Neither do I," he said. "And that being so, the less you and I worry about the form of Government they set up, the better."

In short, even for Europe's major powers, the region was considered a strategic backwater whose capacity to destabilize the continent was directly proportional to how much outside attention those powers gave it. The United States, separated by half a continent and an ocean, had even less reason to become immersed in Balkan tangles—a judgment held by most Americans until the late 1990's.

In little more than two years since then, pursuing policies that would confound any of the American statesmen who constructed the post-Cold War alliance system and be beyond the comprehension of any American leader of the 18th or 19th centuries, the United States, acting in consort with most of its NATO allies, launched two-and-a-half months of bombing raids against a Serbian nation that has never shown any hostility to the United States or its allies, while forming a *de facto* alliance with a nationalist guerrilla group (the Kosovo Liberation Army) whose ideological roots lay in Albanian Marxist-Leninism. The KLA's war aim, hardly a secret to those familiar with the Balkans, was the secession of Kosovo from Yugoslavia and its linkage to Albania—in other words, the kind of forcible changing of borders proscribed explicitly by the Helsinki Accords (to which the United States was a signatory) and by international law in general.

Two years after the bombing's "success" in driving Serbian forces out of Kosovo, the KLA had purged the province of most of its Serbian population and initiated a guerrilla campaign against Macedonia, another small state with a restive Albanian population. The Albanian "freedom fighters"—the toast of Beltway interventionists in 1999—were no longer perceived as such, and Washington began to ease its way toward security cooperation with the very Serb forces it had bombed two years before.

In the course of these acrobatics, American policies generated considerable rancor from Russia, a traditional ally of the Serbs, and China, whose embassy was bombed by U.S. planes. Washington's war thus ratcheted up tensions with its two most dangerous potential adversaries and even helped spur an unlikely rapprochement between them. The bombing left behind considerable environmental destruction (in part because of the massive use of "depleted uranium" shells), destroyed much of Serbia's economic infrastructure, helped to overthrow Serb strongman Slobodan Milosevic (a positive development that might well have occurred anyway), and planted the seeds for a new guerrilla war. As British observer Simon Jenkins put it, "NATO's intervention will have partitioned the whole of Yugoslavia along ethnic lines. . . . Slobodan Milosevic was not the destabilizer of the region. The title belongs to NATO."

Historians seeking to understand why Washington pursued such reckless policies will have to go beyond the official documents and memorandums.

Psychohistory may have a role in explaining whether Madeleine Albright's experience as a Czech diplomat's child in postwar Belgrade contributed to her seeming obsession with punishing the Serbs (and only the Serbs) for murderous nationalist policies engaged in at various times by all the Balkan factions as Yugoslavia collapsed.

Much will be gleaned from the broader climate of foreign-policy opinion in Washington in the late 1990's. On key questions this was remarkably homogenous, due to the fact that the two principal weekly political magazines, the *New Republic* and the *Weekly Standard*—the first leaning Democratic, the second neoconservative and pro-Republican—were in full bipartisan accord. Indeed, without such agreement, without the two journals' stereophonic drumbeat exhorting the United States to intervene against the Serbs and fight them to victorious conclusion, it is hard to imagine the war could have been initiated or pursued so far. Most of Washington's political class felt simply uncertain about the region—sorrowful about its unrelieved turmoil, grateful for America's strategic distance from it.

But the clarity of the interventionist line, the utter self-confidence with which it was espoused by the two magazines pushed many of those with reservations to the sidelines. In a debate in which one side knew what it wanted, and the other didn't see any reason to think about the issue very deeply, the former had a great advantage.

Kosovo first appeared on the Beltway radar screen in 1998. The horrific Bosnian war seemed to be dying down, after much killing on all sides and a U.S.-brokered peace agreement that led to *de facto* partition of the population along ethnic lines. In early 1998, KLA guerrillas began operations against Serbian targets in Kosovo. The *Weekly Standard* quickly

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weighed in with a piece by Stephen Schwartz, a San Francisco-based writer who visited the region and presented a picture of Kosovo Albanian politics so sweetened that it called to mind the accounts of communist countries produced by the duped liberal political pilgrims of the Cold War era. Perhaps cognizant that it was not American policy to support armed separatist insurrections (and that an American envoy to the region had bluntly described the KLA as a terrorist group), Schwartz began by proclaiming that most Albanians were deeply committed to the nonviolent "principles of Martin Luther King." They sought not independence and linkage to "Greater Albania"—this was widely understood as the KLA goal—but only "greater autonomy within a rump Yugoslavia." When Serb forces uncovered a cache of mortars hidden in the houses of some Kosovo Albanian political leaders, Schwartz explained it wasn't evidence of KLA guerrilla activity because "Albanian culture validates possession of firearms." It is true that there had been a nonviolent Albanian campaign against the Serbs, practiced for several years in the early and mid-1990's (overlaying a longer history of the often-bloody ethnic conflict). But by the time the *Standard* published Schwartz's piece, the KLA's guerrilla campaign had begun in earnest. Schwartz dealt with this issue by asserting that many Albanians felt the Serbs had created the KLA as a pretext for repressing them, a view he deemed "plausible."

Thus, according to the *Weekly Standard*, the KLA was possibly a Serb-created myth, while the true Albanian campaign against the Serbs in Kosovo was something like a lunch-counter sit-in.

Marty Peretz's *New Republic*, a publication whose calendar seems strangely stuck on 1936, followed with a more comprehensive rationale for war against the Serbs. The Serbian counterinsurgency in Kosovo was a war against "an ethnicity" that represents a challenge to the "fascist, racialist" foundation of Serbian rule. Milosevic was the "heir" to the 1930's "monsters of Europe." Unlike the *Standard*, the *New Republic* did not seek actually to cast doubt on the existence of the KLA, but grasped the bull by the horns and argued for Kosovo's independence. The Kosovo Albanians were forging "a new nation" with its own banking system and Mother Teresa health clinics, and "lives are more sacred than borders." (The *New Republic*, for some reason, is not known for its support of ethnic independence for Turkey's Kurds.) Some *New Republic* writers acknowledged that a victorious KLA would probably have designs on Macedonia, but Roy Gutman argued that "it is hardly a foregone conclusion that Kosovo's independence would lead to the instant fracturing of Macedonia." Albanian activists would leave for their children the task of establishing unity with Albania. Such a belief required ignoring the words of virtually all KLA leaders and spokesmen.

Linking the Serbs to Nazism was the *New Republic*'s signal contribution to the Balkans debate, repeated again and again. David Rieff, attending a rock concert in the Macedonian capital of Skopje, described pleasant-looking young men and women, families with children, and chants of "Peace in the Balkans." Nevertheless, this reminded him of "Nuremberg, 1936."

Once Washington began bombing, the magazine published a sinister cover story, "Milosevic's Willing Executioners." The title directly evoked Daniel Goldhagen's then-current book alleging widespread German popular complicity in Nazi crimes. Of course, the piece covered itself in protective qualification: "Serbia is not Nazi Germany; Milosevic is not Hitler." But the stain remained, carried by the inflammatory title. The piece dwelled on the paucity of "good Serbs" and made much of what writer Stacy Sullivan described as their "gratuitous sadism."

The examples she gave were underwhelming, though of course there was no shortage of Serb brutalities in Kosovo. She mentioned Serb forces requiring captured Albanians to chant "this is Serbia" or undergo similar humiliations, a tactic found in most ethnic conflicts. The point is not that the ethnic wars of the Balkans were horrible—most readers knew that. The point was to locate the evil exclusively among the Serbs and to liken it to the worst horrors of the century.

Goldhagen himself weighed in the following week, claiming Serbia's deeds differed from Nazi Germany's "only in scale." Admittedly, the Serbs had "suffered some injuries themselves" and lacked any apocalyptic ideology that would lead to the end of Western civilization. But dead Bosnians and Albanians "are just as dead as were the murdered Jews, Poles, Russians, gays and others during Hitler's time." Again, the point was not to inform or analyze but to smear, to whip up the *New Republic*'s readers into a kind of anti-Nazi hysteria against a people that the magazine knew it could not defensibly claim were Nazi-like. Goldhagen advocated military occupation of Serbia, on the model of the occupation of Germany and Japan. The Serbs could be compelled to "remake themselves," ridding themselves of "nationalist, militarist and dehumanizing beliefs." Such a plan, though difficult, was "feasible and morally right."

Secondary to the Serbs-as-Nazis refrain was the *New Republic*'s emphasis on eliminating respect for internationally recognized borders as a desirable aspect of the international system. Jacob Heilbrunn proposed a return to Wilsonian self-determination as a new principle. As NATO pounded the Serbs, he wrote, "the Clinton administration had a golden opportunity to relinquish the idea that borders must remain sacrosanct." He thought the favorable global implications obvious:

> the more splintered the world becomes, the less chance there is of a rival power emerging to check current American dominance. Should China or Russia succumb to their fissiparous tendencies, US pre-eminence would be sealed.

One wonders what a Russian or Chinese foreign-policy analyst would make of this.

Rupert Murdoch's and William Kristol's *Weekly Standard* was comparatively less imaginative than the *New Republic* in drumming up war spirit. While editor Kristol and foreign-policy analyst Robert Kagan regularly called upon the United States to exert itself to impose what they called "benevolent global hegemony," most rank-and-file Republicans were more inclined to clamor for tax cuts, bash the Clintons, and otherwise enjoy the prosperous 1990's.

Thus, the 78-day military campaign against Serbia emerged as the magazine's most perilous moment since its inception. It gave full exposure to the depth of the chasm between the *Standard*'s neoconservative editors and related television talking heads and the ordinary Republicans these media stars were supposedly representing.

The tensions showed. *Standard* editorials lapsed into near-hysterical name-calling—chastising "GOPeaceniks," "McGovern Republicans," and the "motley coalition of neo-isolationists . . . Clin-

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ton despisers . . . and ultra-sophisticated 'realist' intellectuals who have divined that America has no interest in the Balkans." It was a more perilous moment than when it seemed that Pat Buchanan might grab the presidential nomination in 1996: most Republicans, after all, were not Buchananites. But in 1999, most Republicans were unenthusiastic about Clinton's bombing campaign. The editors pulled their hair out when congressional Republicans asked the President to consult Congress by invoking the War Powers Act. Kristol and Kagan argued that the congressional Republican party "hit bottom"—nothing can "cover up the shame of that vote . . . the Republicans defined themselves as the party of defeat."

During the spring of 1999, *Standard* readers got this message every week. A desperate hyper-Nietzcheanism ran through the magazine. "Win it." Use "All necessary force." We must overcome "self defeating preoccupation with casualties" which leads to "strategic paralysis." Unlike the *New Republic*, the *Standard* never took much interest in the actual politics or peoples of the Balkans. There was no fetishing over the promise of "multicultural" Bosnia, little space given to local reporting from the region. The real struggle was over the hearts and minds of the American power elite. As the magazine put it:

> The struggle in Kosovo today is about more than human suffering. It is about more even than European stability and Nato's credibility. At stake is the single overriding question of our time: will the United States and its allies have the will to shape the world in conformance with our interests and principles?

In this struggle, the enemy wasn't Milosevic or the paramilitarist ethnic cleanser Arkan, but Pat Buchanan, the Cato Institute, and the foreign-policy realists at the quarterly *National Interest*. The *Standard*'s great fear wasn't that Milosevic would get away with suppressing the Kosovo Albanians, but that all those Sunbelt Republicans whose ranks filled the House majority would wake up and decide that sending troops and conducting massive airstrikes in a part of the world that no one could find on the map six months before was a little weird and that they wanted no part of an ideology which advocated such overreach.

Both journals got the victory they sought over the Serbs, without the need for the ground invasion both claimed was necessary. The bombing forced Milosevic to withdraw his forces from Kosovo, which is now patrolled by NATO troops and substantially controlled by the Kosovo Liberation Army. Eighteen months after the ceasefire, the Serb strongman Milosevic lost an election and is now awaiting trial at The Hague. The absurdity of the two journals' contention that Milosevic and Serb nationalism were the only real obstacles to peace in the Balkans is evidenced by daily press reports. By the two-year anniversary of NATO's attack, the news from Kosovo was grim: Albanian violence has driven most Serbs out of the province; the KLA has not disarmed and disbanded as Washington had pretended it would; and after first beginning guerrilla operations in a buffer zone of southern Serbia, the KLA is now fomenting a civil war in Macedonia. That war, many observers argue, has more potential to spread and destabilize southeastern Europe than did Milosevic's suppression of the insurgency in Kosovo, and it would not have been possible without NATO's actions.

As of this writing, the *Weekly Standard* has been silent about this facet of the *après-guerre*. "Present Dangers," a collection of foreign-policy essays recently published by Kristol and Kagan, contains surprisingly little about the Kosovo war, considering what a dramatic departure it had been for NATO to give up its 50-year-old status as a defensive alliance. The magazine has since returned to its regular beat of castigating the Palestinians and urging more aggressive policies against Iraq and China.

The *New Republic* hasn't entirely dropped the subject, but where there was once self-righteous passion—1936 and all that—now reigns a resigned weariness with all those messy Balkan nationalities. Writing about Serbian President Vojislav Kostunica's electoral victory over Milosevic and the resulting peaceful transfer of power, Leon Wieseltier described his feelings of "joylessness of justice" and found the jubilant Serb crowds "strangely unintoxicating." This, after a free election leading to the fall of a government the magazine had only months before described as the heir to the Third Reich. The *New Republic* at least acknowledged that NATO's famous victory had brought neither peace nor stability. Taking note of the Albanian campaign against Macedonia, the editors opined:

> It is a harsh irony that the instigation of ethnic conflict in Macedonia has been the work of the Albanians. Weren't the Albanians the victims just yesterday? But this is today, and Macedonia is not Kosovo.

Here, "harsh irony" is a phrase of distancing, designed to veil the fact that the magazine had engaged in years of shrill advocacy and ugly demonization, urging American bombing, invasion, and occupation of a region about which its editors understood very little. Things didn't work out like they had hoped, and it is "ironic." What now? The editors urge the Bush administration to make clear to the insurgent Albanians that it supports "democratic principles." That should do the trick.

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EDUCATION

Who's Slave and Who's Massa?

by Robert Weissberg

Of all the strange bedfellows that politics attracts, one of the oddest is the enduring liaison between the black civil-rights establishment and white liberal academics. One partner—the academic auxiliary—is most dutiful. It is always there: demanding legislation, concocting dubious constitutional interpretations, justifying quotas, or consoling struggling minority students. Criticizing the civil-rights establishment's agenda invites the anger of a swarm of outraged white professors. By contrast, the civil-rights establishment takes academics for granted.

What explains this enduring bond, especially given its one-sided character? Imagine if white academics treated blacks as indifferently as they now treat labor unions. Racial-preference ideology would degenerate into simplistic demands for "a piece of the action." The entire elaborate legal edifice would al-

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most vanish. Black political clout depends on thousands of vocal, energetic, quick-to-mobilize, university-entrenched allies.

Narrow financial self-interest cannot explain the bond. No personal gain comes to white academics who embrace the racial party line. Indeed, endorsement *subverts* selfish monetary advancement. Lucrative minority faculty appointments, separate "black studies" programs, and race-based channeling of research funds impose costs, not benefits, on white academics.

What about cultural affinity? Have white liberal faculty and blacks, like fundamentalist Christians and ultra-Orthodox Jews, built a brotherhood resting upon shared values? While such affinity might explain other odd political unions, the opposite is true here. How many white liberal academics voluntarily socialize with blacks? It is hard to imagine two more divergent cultures. When white liberal defenders put their sympathetic ideological spins on black underclass disorders, this does not flow from personal sympathy: Most white university types undoubtedly loathe the lifestyle of the underclass. Underclass blacks are defended in spite of their culture, not because of it.

What about noble, altruistic compassion? White liberal professors are keenly sympathetic to suffering groups, and who has endured more grief than American blacks? This explanation is only superficially true. The "compassion" dispensed by the academic-review committee is highly selective. Compare how blacks are regarded in contrast to lower-class "white trash." Measured by educational attainment, employment, health-care access, housing, and similar indicators, lower-class white Americans resemble millions of destitute blacks. Furthermore, many poor folk are exploited economically and receive dismal treatment from banks, schools, the police, and the mass media. Nevertheless, poor whites are ineligible for compassion from the universities. Politically, they are regarded as incorrigible, eternal *enemies*, ready to rally to the next George Wallace, not as a disadvantaged group requiring professor-supplied enlightenment.

Equally important in unmasking this sham "compassion" is its doleful result. If these university friends truly cared, innumerable schemes that are still fashionable would have been junked long ago. A doctor administering expensive and clearly injurious treatment is hardly "compassionate." How can professors honestly argue that admitting semiliterate students to elite schools or granting degrees in ersatz fields assists blacks? How can any sensible person contend that race-based hiring, not merit, genuinely produces "excellence though diversity"? As George Orwell observed, some things are so preposterous that only an intellectual could believe them.

This odd attraction is really about advancing an agenda. At heart, the white liberal professor embraces the centralized, allegedly benign, techno-bureaucratic state, an energetic, social-engineering Big Sister. This doctrine is not, of course, the only element in the *Weltanshauung*, but it powerfully permeates innumerable particulars. This utopia is the evolutionary deepening of the bureaucratic Great Society. Governmental officials, in close concert with expert academics, will regulate an earthly paradise into existence. Congress might allocate billions to fight crime, but it is the technocratic specialist, in consultation with the university's center for justice, who ultimately rules.

When stated plainly, it is a loathsome vision. Selling this grotesque fantasy is hopeless, at least if it is frankly acknowledged. Necessity requires chicanery: namely, promoting it as a well-intended intervention to solve a critical problem. And what better problem than overcoming centuries of ill treatment afforded black Americans? Deep down, it is a marriage of expediency, a confluence of interests. Black leaders fixated on academic-inspired "programism" to heal their wounds are but clueless totalitarian foot soldiers.

No inherent reason requires enrolling blacks to lead the charge; only convenience compels. Idealized proletarian "workers" once served Marxist purposes. Young children, the disabled, and confused immigrants are also suitable for justifying expanded bureaucratic intrusion. Environmentalists prefer to employ trifling critters.

Listen closely to the rhetoric of the self-appointed black leadership, and you will hear crude versions of lessons routinely espoused in campus classrooms. Theories of invidious cultural oppression, education as a tool for enhancing self-esteem, the ameliorative power of government, written history as hegemony—together with blank-check compensation for unique suffering—become revealed wisdom. Social-science texts are the new Bible; the omnipotent state replaces God in redeeming the righteous and punishing the wicked.

Consider the obsession with political action as the favored method of collective advancement. Unemployment can be overcome by a mass demonstration commanding Washington to provide jobs, if not careers. If housing is run-down, march on city hall. If schoolchildren cannot read, picket the board of education. Can't afford a house? Have Congress force banks to lend you money. The voter-registration drive mimics a cargo cult. The infatuation with political power, together with unquestioned confidence in governmental effectiveness, is Social Science 101.

The academy also teaches that one's plight flows from impersonal, almost mechanical social conditions, not autonomous individual choices. Society is merely the playing out of abstract "forces." Insisting on personal responsibility is but covert white racism. Why are so many blacks poor? The answer, as any good liberal professor will demonstrate, is that societal forces—institutional racism, shifting economic structures, biased legal doctrines and traditions, the historical legacy of slavery—condemn blacks to despair. Why do black students perform so poorly? Must be the unequal distribution of wealth coupled with inequitable school funding and Eurocentric testing. The students themselves and their parents are blameless.

The prospect of prosperity and happiness via perpetual governmental edict becomes an inalienable right, not an imposition. Liberalism—being free, independent of domination by officialdom—has been converted into the right to be dependent. Abolishing guaranteed welfare, predictably, is thus judged mean-spirited. Even to designate assistance "temporary" engenders outrage. And given the federal government's record of success, the fear of losing eternal client status is probably groundless. Save as a result of funding cutbacks, it is hard to imagine a black-oriented agency folding up, mission accomplished.

The "womb-to-tomb" nature of this dependency is critical. Bureaucratic assistance exists for every stage of a person's lifetime, regardless of his condition. Big Sister never retires; clients pass from one government agency to another. Even leaving welfare for private employment—the alleged big jump—does not

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bring release. This step might require a federal "transition" program which, in turn, might obligate other bureaucrats to monitor employment progress with periodic evaluations. If the newly gained "independence" misfires, safety-net programs stand by for additional retraining and counseling.

Ignoring blacks politically is precarious; inner-city residents are not detached Appalachian whites or apathetic Asians. They can burn down cities. Imagine professors opting for Korean immigrants to achieve their agenda—who would mind the store if millions marched in Washington? Obviously, the centuries of genuine mistreatment of blacks bestow an uncontestable legitimacy to clamors for assistance. Nevertheless, the threat of violence, especially of the mindless rampaging variety, lends a powerful urgency to their pleas.

To see how this all adds up, consider the example of employment policy. Begin with a simple question: Why do blacks lag economically? The ready liberal professorial answer, authoritatively announced to whites and blacks alike (but far more keenly absorbed by the latter), is that whites discriminate against blacks, consciously hiring less-qualified whites over capable blacks. Indeed, the nature of the American economy, from banking to the tax code, intrinsically conspires against blameless blacks. Alternative explanations are brushed aside. Furthermore, since prejudice is so deeply ingrained in our racist culture, only mighty Washington can uproot this evil.

Having heard the revealed truth, blacks demand governmental action. National officials, ever willing to correct historical injustices, begin modestly, with enhanced vocational training or educational loans. Slow progress only fuels the demand for greater bureaucratic intervention. After all, if the problem lies not with the potential employees, it must lie elsewhere. The possibility of misdirected effort is unthinkable. Further professorial analysis discovers fresh remedial statist stratagems. Ever-attentive minority students are told that "market capitalism" or "white definitions of merit" are anti-black and must be replaced. Sympathetic Department of Labor *apparatchiki* concur. Hiring procedures, from aptitude-test content to obtaining criminal records, now become ensnared in detailed federal regulations. Ambitious academics are soon concocting even more interventionist projects.

The battle widens, and additional scholarly consultants are enlisted. But, as any well-schooled black leader knows, progress still lags—yet more programs need to be contrived. Energetic professors are exhausted from traveling to Washington, drafting hurried reports, and attending conferences. Promotion and discharge policies and nearly everything else now fall under governmental investigation. Scholars torture data to show that "merit" is merely a culturally laden arbitrary construct. Some professors abandon teaching altogether, too busy serving as expert witnesses, crunching employment statistics, and devising remedial schemes.

Ultimately, academics and their bureaucratic allies outrank elected officials or industry executives. The professoriate mutates into a modern priestly class of unaccountable interpreters and advisors mumbling in numbers and lowercase Greek letters. Power multiplies as obstacles become more perplexing and unfathomable statistical techniques define the issues. As kings once commanded private clerics, senior bureaucrats now possess personal scholarly counselors. Will increasing the minimum wage harm blacks? Does educational investment yield comparable returns for blacks and whites? How can society be saved? Such questions require that a professorial priest examine the entrails.

Our argument does more than clarify this marriage of convenience; it helps explain the peculiar blind spot liberal academics have for the debilitating, dumbed-down education received by blacks. The silence is deafening. If white academics were, as claimed, true friends of American blacks, we would hardly expect them to tolerate rock-bottom academic standards, shifting blacks into vocationally worthless fields, or the mindless stampede into Afrocentrism as "authentic" black education. Imagine if the professors' children were awarded honorific diplomas after passing impossible-to-fail fantasy courses. Indeed, white liberals, despite their sighs of "concern," are hardly alarmed by tales of incompetent black teachers launching their charges on a sea of misinformation. Eliminating systematic educational incompetence is simply not on the white liberal academic agenda.

Why are those ostensibly committed to learning not outraged by educational atrocities? Surely, professors can painlessly resist idiotic programs solely intended to placate misguided blacks. Surely, professors are not compelled to participate in social passes to boost black graduation rates. But, unfortunately, this debilitating "education" virtually guarantees future dependency, to be remedied through expert bureaucratic intervention. Escaping the plantation is now nearly impossible. Genuinely helpful advice—for example, heightened diligence and stricter grading—offers few opportunities for intervention to the academic class. Rather, the would-be guardians of learning demand a rethinking of testing, altering social definitions of "knowledge," and similar grand exercises by learned experts. More generally, when schools cultivate laziness or fail to teach basic literacy, it is "the system," not the blameless victims, that must be reformed, and who better to direct this transformation?

Dumbed-down education fuels the fires of resentment, which, in turn, drive the relentless demands for government programism. The mechanics are elementary. First, under the guise of "providing opportunity," black students are over-placed academically. When barely literate high schoolers show up at demanding colleges, their inevitable failure creates resentment and anger, not gratitude. If they cannot master calculus, it must be someone else's fault. Some teachers themselves confirm this fantasy. Angry marginal students will soon denounce the white establishment as racist, deceitful, uncaring, and otherwise "insensitive" to the needs of those requiring continued massive government intervention. Such outrage, needless to say, will be interpreted by the chattering class to mean the need for even more government intervention. Politically useful rage would be far less likely if blacks students were placed in more suitable schools.

I am not insinuating that all white liberal academics consciously promote or applaud black educational failure. Some, at least abstractly, may genuinely deplore the silliness and horrible record. It is a question of toleration, standing idly by and tacitly cooperating, not directly insisting on lower standards or inane curricula. When given the chance to act, few white liberal academics offer "tough love." At every stage of the process, from grading freshmen essays to certifying dissertations, decisions typically reward minimal performance. Many blacks get easy diplomas; bureaucrats, thanks to professorial tolerance, receive clients for

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life. For many academics, this is an unacknowledged confluence of interests, not a diabolical plot.

In their endless support of the civil-rights movement, liberal academics seemingly have covered themselves in glory. At least initially, the assistance was sincere and did ameliorate many of America's worst faults. But, alas, the honeymoon is over. As in enduring marriages, relationships evolve. Yesterday's passionate affection has been replaced by a craven (though vehemently denied) utility: Blacks now are conscripted to expand a powerful state ever attentive to professorial advice. The outcome is often evil. Policies subverting our values, even if totalitarian in character, can be "sold" as commendable for black civil rights. Why else regulate such personal matters as housing and employment? Why else permit immense governmental intrusion into business and education?

Harshly put, academics are guilty of self-serving malpractice on a grand scale. They feed their patients a steady diet of debilitating nonsense that aggrandizes the state and empowers themselves. Endless talk of compassion is self-delusion. The relationship, deep down, is opportunistic. We can only hope blacks will eventually discover the fraud and discard their current overseers.

Robert Weissberg is a professor of political science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

SOCIETY

Hearing More, Feeling Less

by Janet Scott Barlow

On a Wednesday in June, it is reported that a woman in Houston, Texas, has methodically drowned her five children in the bathtub. The day after this horrific news, two things happen. First, the woman's husband—his wife now jailed, his children not yet buried—stands outside his home and, while displaying a framed portrait of his family, talks at length with the many reporters gathered at his house, as the many photographers also gathered take his picture. Through it all, this man whose family has just been obliterated conducts himself, even in his grief, as if it were the most natural thing on earth to use this moment to be questioned and photographed by a throng of strangers. (Only belatedly do I arrive at the sickening realization that the father behaves as he does because such behavior now is the most natural thing on earth.)

The second thing that happens is an explosion of coverage of the event on talk television, most of it focused on a single question: "Where did the system fail?" The unexamined and unchallenged premise of these discussions is that a properly working "system" would have prevented a mother in Houston from drowning her children on a Wednesday morning in June.

The system under assault covers everything from the medical and mental-health establishments to the availability of family support. But the woman who drowned her children did not exist outside this system and had not been ignored, neglected, or victimized by it. In fact, she had received treatment for several years, with various drugs, for repeated episodes of depression. And she did have family support—a mother-in-law who came by daily to help with the children.

If, even under these conditions, the system could be said to have failed the woman, one question logically presents itself: What evidence would be required to prove that the system had *not* failed her? The answer in this case is both obvious and meaningless: living children. Under the terms of the televised discussion, the only way the system could be said to have worked on behalf of the Houston mother is if she had not chosen to kill her children. In other words, only by doing the most unexceptional thing in the world—keeping her children alive—could the mother's behavior be seen as proof of the system's efficacy. But how do you evaluate a catastrophe that does not exist? If you define the act of infanticide as a failure, does the absence of the act constitute a success?

If the questions come back on themselves, it's because the argument is rigged. No matter. The integrity of the argument is not the point. The point is the need for television programming—product, hours and hours of product. Ghastly occurrences no longer have real meaning in our society. They now exist merely to provide mutually beneficial opportunities for self-promotion to the triumvirate of talk TV, experts for hire, and political advocates.

Show the grief. Find the culprit. Advance the agenda. This is the context in which the unspeakable now exists in our culture. There was a time when we could hear that a mother in America had drowned her children, and we could take that knowledge, unwelcome as it was, into ourselves and follow it wherever it led: to awe at the limits of our human understanding; to relief at the sunshine outside our window; to prayer for the souls of those dear children; to uncompromised sorrow.

But such events can no longer have their way with us, because they can no longer find their way *to* us. They are impeded by both the nature of television and by the obscenely doubt-free "insights" of psychologists, lawyers, feminists, and all the other media whores. Mock-solemn news accounts of which Houston child was drowned first are interspersed with energetic debates about the conditions under which that child and his siblings might still be alive. To all this, we listen mutely, stupidly, unaffected and unmoved, because the incident that generated the din surrounding us—on a Wednesday morning in June, a woman in Houston, Texas, methodically drowned her children in the bathtub—is being presented not as an act to be felt but one meant, as pornography is meant, to displace feeling. Emotionalism supplants emotion. Sensation suffocates truth. Thus, we respond, but we don't absorb. We react, but we don't feel.

And before we know it, we are isolated and self-forsaken, losing our humanity along with our humility, one irretrievable piece at a time. And losing, too, the connections that allow us to seek God in the things we least understand.

On a Wednesday morning in June, a woman in Houston, Texas, methodically drowned her children in the bathtub.

Janet Scott Barlow, who writes from Cincinnati, Ohio, is the author of The Nonpatriotic President: A Survey of the Clinton Years *(Chronicles Press).*

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by George McCartney

So What's a Metaphor?

A.I., Steven Spielberg's fantasy about a robotic future, should stand as an object lesson to directors: Any film that includes Fred Astaire on its soundtrack had better be light on its feet. Astaire's eloquent walk-on here reveals *A.I.* to be shod in concrete. Forty minutes into the narrative, we meet Gigolo Joe (Jude Law looking like a rejected Cary Grant effigy from Madame Tussaud's). Joe is an android programmed to lift the spirits of lonely women. But when this mechanical loverboy plays Astaire's peerless rendition of "Cheek to Cheek" on his built-in circuitry, the effect is sadly deflating. He inadvertently confirms what we've already concluded: *A.I.* is to Astaire as lead is to mercury. It ain't got an ounce of dance in it.

A.I. is not bad in the usual Hollywood way. It's been made with care by people who want to engage their audience seriously. Its cinematography is exquisite, and its visualization of the future is often compelling. Unlike most big-budget films today, its special effects serve its story rather than overwhelm it. The acting is excellent throughout, especially that of Haley Joel Osment, the boy who gave *The Sixth Sense* its uncanny intensity. Even William Hurt, who has been sleepwalking through his recent performances, takes fire in the role of a well-intentioned but shortsighted Frankensteinian scientist who insists on creating robots capable of genuine feelings. If they can be made to experience love, he reasons, they'll have the "mechanism" by which they will develop a subconscious. (Perhaps he means soul.)

There are even moments in which questions of faith, morals, and mortality are raised far more sharply than other mainstream entertainers would dare. But Spielberg, perhaps under the influence of the late Stanley Kubrick (who had originally planned to make this film), has picked up the wrong end of his narrative's premise—and he never lets go. His grip is as firmly literal as it is aesthetically fatal.

Working from Brian Aldiss's story "Supertoys Last All Summer Long" and a preliminary script developed by Kubrick, Spielberg tells the tale of David, a robotic replica of an 11-year-old boy programmed to love whoever "adopts" him. The trouble begins when he's taken into the home of a couple as a substitute for their biological son, Martin, who is suffering from some unspecified malady that has rendered him indefinitely comatose. David does his job too well. The mother becomes completely attached to him. Understandably, when Martin recovers and comes home, he sees the robot boy as his rival. Programmed for good behavior and tireless decency, David would prove an unendurable trial for any ordinary child, let alone a sickly "sibling" recently back from the hospital. Soon, Martin is plotting David's downfall. Instinctively taking advantage of the robot's innocence, he lures his mechanical brother into activities staged to seem willfully malevolent. The parents feel they have no choice. They must get rid of David for the safety of their real child.

Before David finds himself abandoned, however, he has overheard his mother read *Pinocchio* to his flesh-and-blood "sibling." He reasons that, if *he* can become a real boy, his mother will love him once more and take him back into her home. And so he begins to search for the Blue Fairy who rescued Pinocchio from his wooden fate. David's quest takes him (and us) on a swift tour of the narrative's future world. We discover that the greenhouse effect has become a *fait accompli*. Coastal cities are underwater, and population growth has never been more menacing. Governments of the developed world have made pregnancy without special licensing illegal. The affluent live comfortably by virtue of robots who do the scut work of society. Meanwhile, what's left of the short-changed working class seethes with resentment at having been replaced in the labor market by "thinking" metal. The workers of the world are now united in their hatred of robots. They celebrate organic life by kidnapping their mechanical competitors and sadistically destroying them in demolition-derby-style events. The hapless robots are shot from cannons, set aflame, and melted with industrial corrosives. Programmed for obedience to the end, the rational mechanisms offer little resistance to the rabid humans beyond meekly pleading that their sensory circuits be disconnected before the wreckage begins.

Despite witnessing this all-too-human beastliness and nearly becoming one of its victims, David persists in his quest to join the ranks of flesh and blood. He's willing to do whatever it takes to win back his "mother's" love. We're encouraged to believe that he's more genuinely human than the humans. This is the film's moral, and it's a real sentimental clunker. While it may be pretty to think so, genuine humanity does not reside in the kind of automatic goodness David exhibits. Isn't this Carlo Collodi's point in the original *Pinocchio*? The puppet boy becomes a "real" boy by overcoming his innocent susceptibility to being misled and then decisively putting his father's welfare before his own. Isn't this the moral challenge we all face if we want to become humanly worthwhile? It's always a struggle to overcome, however partially and provisionally, our innate selfishness. Spielberg has put the cart before the horse, goodness before the struggle. David is a liberal's sentimental dream. As such, he's too inhumanly sweet to serve as a serious reproach to our admittedly sinful natures.

Filmmaking is Spielberg's talent, not philosophizing. As usual, he's created a correct thinker's Manichean universe populated by the inherently good (this time the robots) and the irredeemably nasty (the humans). Worse, he seems to be playing with a notion that Kubrick is

A.I. Artificial Intelligence

Produced by DreamWorks and Warner Bros.
Directed by Steven Spielberg
Screenplay by Ian Watson, based on a story by Brian Aldiss
Released by Warner Bros.

Sexy Beast

Produced by Channel Four Films and Recorded Pictures Company
Directed by Jonathan Glazer
Screenplay by Louis Mellis and David Scinto
Released by Fox Searchlight Pictures

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reported to have entertained: that, ultimately, humanity will be subsumed and redeemed by the artificial higher intelligence of a computerized robot culture. In what seems a desperate coda, Spielberg introduces—as a *deus ex machina*—a band of sleek, jointless mechanical beings to lend their gleaming hands to the proceedings. They look suspiciously like the benevolent aliens who came to enlighten us all at the end of his *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977). Spielberg, bless him, always insists on consoling us with as hopeful an ending as he can muster. Personally, I found his conclusion ghoulish—literally so—for reasons I shouldn't reveal here.

For all its visual beauty and technical imagination, *A.I.* is peculiarly lacking in resonance. It has some very affecting, very intense moments, but overall it falls flat. Spielberg has warped the literary nature of Aldiss's original story (as Kubrick may have as well). He has chosen to make literal what was meant to be a metaphorical premise. The robot in Aldiss's story functions as a reproach to human selfishness; its fate as a mechanical being is irrelevant. By contrast, Spielberg's sole focus is the pathos of his boy robot *as a robot*. He insists on realistically rendering David's artificiality. To take just one of innumerable instances, he makes a big deal of David at the dinner table. Because he cannot ingest food, David does a pantomime in order to keep his adoptive parents company, lifting an empty fork to his mouth and making chewing and swallowing motions. One evening, however, he decides to eat for real. He swallows a mouthful of creamed spinach and shorts out his circuitry, causing the synthetic flesh of his face to sag horribly. Although visually clever, this emphasis on David's mechanical being undermines his symbolic function. Instead of a literary tactic meant to stimulate reflection on what it means to be human, he becomes something far less interesting: a bit of *Popular Mechanics* speculation about whether or not robots have a legitimate future as our descendants. (I don't know about you, but my idea of progeny doesn't run to hard drives and software, even if they are morally programmed for unwavering decency.)

By making Aldiss's original premise the literal point rather than the metaphor of his narrative, Spielberg has fallen into an error similar to the one to which his human characters succumb. He's preferred the seeming security of a device to the unpredictable challenge of life. Still, his film is provocative and worth seeing. But it's decidedly not for kids. It portrays loss and mortality far too starkly for youngsters under 14.

Sexy Beast is a small British film that has no difficulty with its literary metaphors. They tumble into the plot as playfully and unapologetically as the six-foot boulder that whizzes past our protagonist, Gal Dove (Ray Winstone), just a minute after we meet him. This, of course, is itself a great big metaphor, but it's not nearly as big as the one played by Ben Kingsley as Don Logan, Gal's worst nightmare.

The film's opening shot reveals Gal sunning his oiled and beefy body by the exquisitely tiled pool of his hillside house on the Costa del Sol in Spain. He is a former London criminal who has retired to the good life with an erstwhile porn star for his faithful and devoted wife. He has what seems to be an aging, softening thug's dream. The first words out of his mouth, however, suggest otherwise. "Bloody hell," he says to himself, lying there in his sun-yellow, ridiculously brief bathing tights. "I'm roasting." The next scene is shot through the flickering flames of a barbecue grill, turning Gal's fleshy face into a crimson jack-o'-lantern. Although he resists the knowledge, he's in a hell of his own making. Logan will clarify matters. When this live depth charge from his criminal past shows up, the atmosphere turns positively gelid with fear. Gal and his wife move about their airy house in slow motion as though they were 20 leagues under a sea mined with terror. Gal's acquaintance with Greek myth may be slight, but he knows his nemesis when he meets him.

The fun of this film is in the performances of Winstone and Kingsley. They're enjoying themselves immensely, and this energizes the narrative. Kingsley has shaved his head so it looks like a missile tip atop his square-shouldered, ramrod back. This man means business. He doesn't walk; he marches. He doesn't talk; he barks. He doesn't ask; he commands. Kingsley has contrived to transform the large, soft eyes that served him so eloquently as Ghandi. Here, they have become two burning coals that flare into the faces of everyone he meets, searing away any last remnant of pretense or falsity. This is a man who calls everyone's bluff. He's come to bring Gal back to London to assist in a heist. Why he so urgently needs Gal is never explained—which is puzzling, since Winstone looks like nothing more than a criminal journeyman. He may once have had some muscle to recommend him, but at this point in his life, this asset has sagged shamefully.

You can see why Gal wants no part of Logan's assignment. It's written in his fleshiness. Winstone makes a slightly depressive pin cushion of Gal, absorbing the barbs the implacable Logan hurls at him, one after another. "It's like this," Gal begins again and again, trying to explain his current preference for the quiet life. But Logan won't let him get the traitorous words out. "Like whot; like whot," he interrupts derisively in his staccato cockney. Finally Winstone can only whimper, "I'd be useless," to which Logan retorts, "You're disgusting."

As the one-sided verbal sparring goes on, we come to realize Gal's life is infected with Logan; he was contaminated many years ago as a member of the British underclass, and he's never purged this sexy beast from his system. The question the film raises is whether or not he ever will. As metaphors go, Kingsley and Winstone are superbly eloquent. c

On Teaching Homer in English Translation

by Donald Carlson

The wonder is they do not point and hoot,
While I, a fellow monkey in a suit,
Assume my stance, as if today I'll reach
To them the living bread of human speech.
When their young souls are starved for *to kalon*,
How do I dare to offer them a stone?

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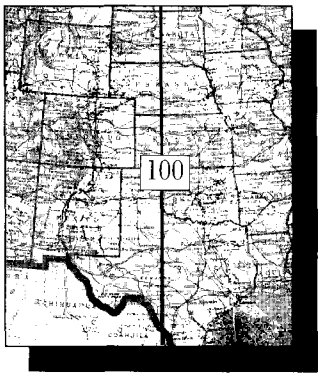
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Sunday Summer



In June, the sun gets up about the time the pollen release ends. Keeping the bedroom window down in the early morning hours is a simple preventive for hay fever that requires only getting up around 2:00 A.M. to drop the window. It's easier to take a pill the night before and forget about it. And another at 6:30 when the alarm clock goes off, an hour and a half before Sunday Mass.

Wakening with hay fever is like swimming up from the bottom of the sea with leg irons attached to your ankles and wrists—and then the sinuses begin flowing. Clutching a handkerchief, I went to the kitchen for a cup of black coffee (lactose gums the vocal cords) and a cough drop. I showered, dressed in coat and tie, looked over my music and the day's readings, and began a warm-up—not much of one, because the vibrations make the sinus flow worse.

At 7:30 on a Sunday morning in June, the wide streets of the town were deserted beneath the old cottonwoods in their fresh, new leaves, overhanging the white picket fences. Beyond the shade the trees made, the morning was textured like a canvas, and watersprinklers caught the sunlight and flung it out in long, windup pitches, throwing wheels of waterspray across the small green lawns bordered by purple lilacs growing close against the gabled frame-and-stone houses. The sky was cleanly blue and the asphalt surfacing smelled fresh and clean as the newly watered earth. I parked outside St. Laurence O'Toole and went inside the church, carrying the music bag. A few people, most of them elderly, were in the pews already, on their knees on the kneelers or staring forward from the benches to the candles burning up front. I went on up to the choir loft and took my things from the bag—music, missal, water bottle, cough drops, eyeglasses—and laid them out across two adjustable music stands. Below, the church was filling up, and I smelled the scent of candles and the familiar church smell. Jean Karch went forward to post the hymn numbers before joining me upstairs in the loft.

"How's your throat this morning?" she asked, as she unlocked the organ and rolled the top back.

"It could be worse, given the pollen count. I should be able to get through all right, if I just take it carefully."

Catholics don't sing, which is either good for the cantor or not so good, depending. Today was easy work, taken up a half-step to accommodate my hay fever as well as my *tessitura*. Everything moved along fine, and then it was Communion. The Communion hymn was "*Panis Angelicus*"—Lambillote's setting, not César Franck's. They like to remind you you're singing for Him, but why He minds a scraped note or a cracked one less than the average pewsitter, nobody ever says.

An easy attack, of course, then stay forward, letting the chin drop as far as the sternum, to keep the air force off the gummy cords. "*Panis angelicus, fit panis hominum . . .*" *Piano, piano*; you can't belt "*Panis Angelicus*," anyway. St. Laurence has superb acoustics; the unwrapping of a lozenge in the loft must be audible to those seated directly below, while a well-produced voice singing *pianissimo* fills the church with softly resonant sound. "*O res mirabilis manducat dominum . . .*" Only a little more gas, and the cords will sputter into a tickle, the tickle will break to the inevitable cough . . . disaster, whether God is listening or not. "*Pauper, servus, et humilis.*" Ticklish work, but I get through it all right. God has not been offended, I am not humiliated, and the communicants have enjoyed a peaceful Communion, their prayer undisturbed by glottal squawks from the tenor in the choir loft.

I went home after Mass and changed out of Sunday clothes into jeans and a snapbutton denim shirt. As the wind got up, my hayfever worsened along with it, but since nothing I had planned for the rest of the day depended on my vocal condition, I wasn't paying attention any longer.

Horses resemble their successor, the automobile, in always having something wrong with them. Lacking a carburetor or computer inside, they *are* easier to work on; on the other hand, you don't have to catch a car before you can start in on the repair job. I am not really a horse lover, having a skeptical and fundamentally utilitarian view of the animal which, so far as I have ever been able to tell, is how he sees me as well. Years ago, after my gelding cut his leg on barbwire, the vet recommended a shot of penicillin daily over a period of ten days. The treatment progressed smoothly for the first six; on the seventh day, the horse was reluctant to come in to me, and on the eighth he reared when I approached him with the syringe and nearly pulled the trailer where I had him snubbed over on top of both of us. Since then, the refusal to be caught has gone from understandable reluctance to an infuriating game at which the man always wins—eventually—and the horse takes his revenge for having lost.

The best thing is to imagine the animal as yourself and yourself as God Who knows what is good for you, better than you do yourself. In this case, Star had developed a slightly swollen knee that the vet said could be an injury (mares, like women, will bite and kick) or an arthritic inflammation. Whatever the problem, my job was to apply Dr. Hopper's special salve to the affected area, wrap the knee in plastic to heat it, secure the plastic with stretch bandage and the bandage with duct tape, above and below, and administer two grams of Bute, orally. Only, I had to catch the sonofabitch first.

The whole business took 25 minutes: 21 to get a halter on the knothead, four to do the doctoring. When I was through with it, I went around closing gates to make a smaller enclosure, carried over a third of a bale of hay, and filled the water bucket from the pump. It's a lot easier to catch a horse off 1,500 square feet of ground than it is off a couple of acres. I left him hanging his head over the gate, loaded the mare into the trailer, and

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drove out of town, stopping for a six-pack of beer and a bag of ice from a convenience store in West Laramie.

You could pull a horse trailer up Jelm Mountain, I suppose, but what would be the point in doing it? I parked the rig beside the two-track near the base of the hill and rode horseback as far as the shoulder midway up. We left the road and continued on across a sagebrush park to the line of woods where the mountain drops off steeply through the trees to the southwest, giving a view of the Laramie River winding out of the Medicine Bow Mountains and the snowy peaks away down in Colorado. The mare, fat and out of shape from the long winter, blew hard while I removed the saddle and bridle and snubbed her with a long rope to a redbark pine tree. From the saddlebags I took a bottle of still-cold beer and *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* and carried them over to a larger tree, where I sat with my back against the rough-barked trunk to drink beer and read the Michigan stories by Hemingway.

On a fishing trip in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, I was skunked by Papa a few years ago. The Big Two-Hearted River is on the map all right, so I packed in my fly rod and flies and drove over there from St. Ignace. Though I found it easily enough, the river didn't look at all the way Hemingway had described it. Instead of being wide and fast-moving and open and sunny, it was narrow and closed-in and dark, teacolored from tannic acid and with a murky bottom in place of a sandy one. I tried the water for an hour anyway and came away empty-handed, leaving three or four trout flies in the branches overhanging the opposite shore and a generous blood donation with the native mosquito population. Later, I learned that the river Hemingway actually describes is called the Fox River. But, since the Big Two-Hearted name fit the theme of the stories exactly, he rearranged reality some 40 miles by appropriating it to his literary purpose. I've never seen it mentioned, but the closest thing to an explanation of why Hemingway lived most of his life as an expatriate is in Carlos Baker's *Letters*, where as early as the 1920's or 30's, he laments that America is being flattened by bulldozers and covered by tract houses. Elsewhere, Hemingway takes comfort in the fact that, while the world changes, it does not change as fast as we do. More than half a century later, it is changing *much* faster: a calamitous and tragic thing for Americans, and for humanity in general.

I checked the mare's rope and took a hike around the shoulder of the mountain, in a hard wind coming up from Colorado. The wind wasn't gusting: It poured, steady and full as the current at the bottom of a deep river, smoothing the mountain and wearing it down, like a gray, huge boulder submerged in the river of time. New green grass sprang in last year's towheads, and the mountain lupin was budded. The wind in the pine forest and the clouds overhead being pushed by the wind were all one sound, the sound of the earth turning on its axis, out of yesterday through today into tomorrow. The clouds traveled low beneath a high ceiling of blue sky, clear-edged and shining, gray on the undersides, and there was little moisture in them. Perhaps tomorrow, when they returned from their voyage around the world, swollen with outrage at what they had witnessed, the clouds would burst in anger, and there would be rain. I struggled up to the ridgeline and paused there, bracing against the wind, for a look around. On either side of the ridge, a long draw ran steeply down to a grassy pocket sheltering a stand of tender green aspen trees. From the base of the mountain, the Laramie Plain stretched away, still green under the late spring sky except for the alternating patches of black, blue, red, and white: cloud, water, clay, alkali. On the way down to camp, the long pine needles and fat pine cones crunched underfoot, adding their dust to the thin layer of soil covering the mountain rock. Such drought, so much wind, made a cookfire impossible.

I rode the mare back down the mountain and loaded her in the trailer, wondering what was for supper at the Egolfs'. From Jelm Mountain to Barber Lake Road west of Centennial isn't that many miles by the backroads. At the old timbered lodge, the kids fished for trout from a raft while Jamie sat out on the balcony overlooking the high-water creek. She called down to say I was in time for a drink, and welcome to stay for teriyaki chicken if I had no other plans. I didn't have any beyond the bottle of red wine on the front seat of the truck, so I brought that up with me when I joined her on the balcony, and we both had a drink, sitting under the stirring American flag at the top of its pole in the smoke from the citronella candle and feeling the heat draw quickly from the thin air. The red wine tasted wonderful after the beer.

"Did you go into town for church today?" I asked Jamie.

"No. I didn't. We've been working all day, painting the lodge. I'm exhausted now. How about you? Did *you* go to church?"

"Yes, I went to Mass."

"Did your voice work all right this morning?"

"It worked okay. You wouldn't have mistaken me for Jussi Björling, though."

Evening shadow crept upward from the base of the treeline across the creek until the tops of the pines flamed like supper candles. We pulled on jackets against the chill and Sarah and Katie and Ben came in from the river and warmed themselves with red wine. All three attend Earlham College, a Quaker school in Indiana founded in 1847, so there are certain things we don't talk about. I have the impression they believe the world is growing better day by day, in every way. In *almost* every way. It's a good way to feel if you're 21 years old. The alternative, probably, is madness followed by early death, like Hamlet.

So we didn't discuss anything serious but told bad jokes instead—the more inane the better—and laughed a lot, drinking wine. After a while, Jamie and Sarah brought supper up from the kitchen downstairs, and we ate teriyaki chicken, rice, and a green salad, with more wine—a good white this time.

Now the light was all gone from the creek bottom and from the mountainside most of the way up, and the clouds overhead were a quiet pink, no brightness left in them, just the pretty color reflected in a back-eddy of the creek. It had been a lovely Sunday, out here in the American hinterland, and now it was time to run the flag down the pole. "This is nice," I told Jamie. And left it at that, while thinking, "The world changes. You can't tell yet from here, but right now it's changing even faster than you are."

c

LIBERAL ARTS

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"[I]f sterling character were the main guide to greatness, all America would formally commemorate the birthday of Robert E. Lee instead of the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr."

—*from Sean Wilentz, "America Made Easy"* (New Republic, *July 2, 2001*)

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FULL REGISTRATION (PANELS, FRIDAY NIGHT RECEPTION AND OPENING ADDRESS, SATURDAY LUNCHEON, SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET, AND SONGFEST)
JRC MEMBER _____ @ $150.00 EA=$_____
NON-MEMBER _____ @ $175.00 EA=$_____

SATURDAY PANELS ONLY (NO MEALS OR RECEPTIONS)
MEMBER OR NON-MEMBER _____ @ $ 75.00 EA=$_____

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET ONLY
MEMBER OR NON-MEMBER _____ @ $ 65.00 EA=$_____

TOTAL ENCLOSED $_____

I cannot attend the annual meeting, but I would like it to be a success. Enclosed is my contribution of $_____.

Make checks payable to The John Randolph Club and mail with completed form to
JRC, The Rockford Institute, 928 N. Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103

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[I]t is because the Serbians have been warlike that we have found it possible to be peaceful. If they are fierce it is because no courage short of sheer fanaticism could have kept the frontiers of Christendom against such locust-clouds of foes, while we were electing our first parliaments and building our first cathedrals. While all that we call the world was being made they were the wall of the world . . .
—G.K. Chesterton

The Rockford Institute presents
An International Convivium

Join
Thomas Fleming, Srdja Trifkovic,
Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem., *and* Thomas Molnar
for

A Balkan Adventure
September 17-28, 2001

London and Paris may be old hat for the American traveler, but the Balkans, situated on the wild frontier between Christendom and Islam, remains a place of mystery and adventure: rugged mountains, an exquisite Adriatic coast, medieval monasteries that even the Turks could not destroy, and an equally enduring and ancient people whose rich cultural traditions are more than a match for the landscape.

Visit Belgrade to see firsthand the effects of communism and "benevolent global hegemony" on this great city at the confluence of the Danube and Sava Rivers and meet with the top writers and political figures working to restore their nation's sovereignty.

Ride a luxury coach through the mountains, stopping at historic monasteries like Mileseva (site of the famous "White Angel" fresco). Raft down the spectacular Tara River Gorge (second only to the Grand Canyon in its breathtaking depth) and visit Cetinje, the old royal capital of Montenegro, where we will be welcomed by the metropolitan archbishop.

Visit the historic Adriatic town of Budva and learn the history and culture of a region that has known Greek, Roman, Venetian, Turkish, Austrian, and Serbian masters. Sail up to magnificent Kotor Bay (the only fjord in the Mediterranean) and visit ancient Orthodox and Catholic churches. Mix with the locals—peasants, poets, priests, and monks. Hear the epic poems recited by the guslars, swim in the Adriatic, eat fresh grilled fish and mountain lamb roasted on the spit, raise a glass (or two or three) of *slivovic*, drink deeply of the excellent Montenegrin red wines, and experience a vibrant culture that hasn't yet been reduced to "heritage."

The price for the convivium includes 11 nights' lodging (including a week in Budva's top internationally rated hotel), three sumptuous meals a day, transportation by luxury coach from Belgrade to Montenegro, all lectures and excursions, and transportation back to Belgrade.

Registration is limited. Please register early so we can assist you in obtaining the necessary visa.
For air travel arrangements to Belgrade, we recommend Srdjan at Axioma travel: (800) 929-4662.
Mention The Rockford Institute.
For more details, call Christopher Check, Executive Vice President, at (815) 964-5811.

Rates: ❑ Single: $2,495.00 ❑ Couple: $3,995.00

Name(s)_____

Address_____ City, State, Zip_____

Phone, Fax, E-mail_____

Send registration form with payment to:
The Rockford Institute, 928 North Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103

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